#2015

Middle-earth® Sourcebook I.C.E.®

The Kin-strife™

Based on J.R.R. Tolkien's THE LORD OF THE RINGS™

THE KIN-STRIFE™

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This module is dedicated to the memory of Kaj Munk (1898-1944),
fearless Danish priest and author;
murdered by a tyrant's henchmen for speaking the truth.
Sometimes one chooses to do and die, that others may live.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is an unusual Middle-earth module, both in origin and in content. The idea for writing a campaign module based on the Kin-strife dates back to the fall of 1990, when I participated in an exciting adventure of Chris Seeman's post-Kin-strife campaign, in which Gondor faced a difficult reconstruction following the civil war. I quickly saw great potential for this era; and in the spring of 1992, I sent an outline for such a module to Jessica Ney, who liked the idea. During the summer of that year, I gathered a team of Swedish and American writer friends, and initiated the project.

Previous Middle-earth modules have focused upon regional description, emphasizing topography, flora, fauna, and inhabitants. Nominally these are set around the year 1640, but in practice most of the information is applicable to any period during the Third Age. By contrast, the Kin-strife presupposes a temporally-specific setting. During the Usurper's reign, Gondor's six major cities—Pelargir, Umbar, Lond Ernil, Osgiliath, Minas Anor, and Minas Ithil—are the foci of political and military action; consequently most of the module describes the role these cities play in the repressive rule of Castamir the Usurper (1437-1447). Hence, the political and administrative structures, military organization, and legal system are also described (material relevant to any campaign set in Gondor during the Third Age).

Included in the module is a section on how to resist a tyrant, with advice for how player characters might participate in various underground, anti-Castamir activities. Many of the scenarios offered draw upon the European experience of Dutch, Danish, and French resistance groups during the German occupation of 1940-1945 (the basic principles of which are more or less translatable into a Third Age context, despite the differing levels of technology). The principal opponent of the resistance, the Côr Aran, is modeled after die Hofpolizei (the secret police organization used by the Habsburg emperors during the Renaissance).

Several city-based adventures launch characters into the complex intrigue and conflicts of the Kin-strife, a struggle that is waged not only between Eldacar and Castamir's supporters, but also among common criminals, Southron spies, and servants of the Enemy seeking to further the plans of their masters. There are many strange conspiracies and webs of deceit; and characters must beware, lest they become ensnared and perish in the tumultuous events of the Usurper's reign.

Anders Blixt
Stockholm, May 1994

"People of Osgiliath!" Orodreth of Morthond addressed the multitude assembled before the Dome of Stars. "Your defence of this city has been a valiant one; and yet in surrendering peacefully you have lost no honour, but rather have shown wisdom in a hard time. Eldacar who once was King is now fled, and so has abandoned that claim. The captains will choose a rightful successor to rule over you in his stead. We are not your enemies! See, Ornendil whom you love I have defeated in fair combat; he shall receive mercy and live without shame. Pledge to us your loyalty, and you shall fare likewise."

The crowd heard him gladly, thinking that their lives would be spared, if they submitted to the victorious rebels. Orodreth, too, was relieved at their response, for he desired to stay the rebels from exacting punishment on the citizens of Osgiliath, who had supported the now-exiled King during the siege of the preceding months. He had personally led the final attack on the Great Bridge, and had captured both Ornendil and his own cousin Mórdulin, who was Ornendil's betrothed.

At first he had proposed to allow their escape, for they had been close in friendship before the outbreak of the war five years ago; but Orodreth's trusted companions from Linhir urged him to bring them before the captains for judgment. Castamir, they assured him, proposed to spare the King's son in order to gain the confidence of the people. Only in this way, they said, could Orodreth hope to save the people of Osgiliath from the vengeful captains of Pelargir.

It was a lie.

As the people debated among themselves what their answer should be, a voice was raised among the captains. It was Calimon of Lebennin, the cousin of Castamir, who held a grudge against Orodreth. He had bribed Orodreth's companions to persuade their leader to bring Ornendil into their power, and now his rival from Morthond had fallen into Castamir's trap.

"Orodreth," said he, "the captains applaud your undying efforts to avert needless bloodshed in this unfortunate kin-strife; but it seems that in sparing Ornendil's life you have overstepped your bounds. For though Eldacar is fled as you say, he has not in truth relinquished his claim to the throne. You, Orodreth, have willfully spared the life of his son and heir, whose blood is a threat to our righteous cause; and some there are who tell us that you had thought to set Ornendil free, rather than slaying him at once as you should have.

"What proof have we that you also do not harbour ill-designs against us? What assurance do we possess that your betrayal is not a ploy of Belfalas against our confederacy? Indeed, what token of your allegiance could you give that

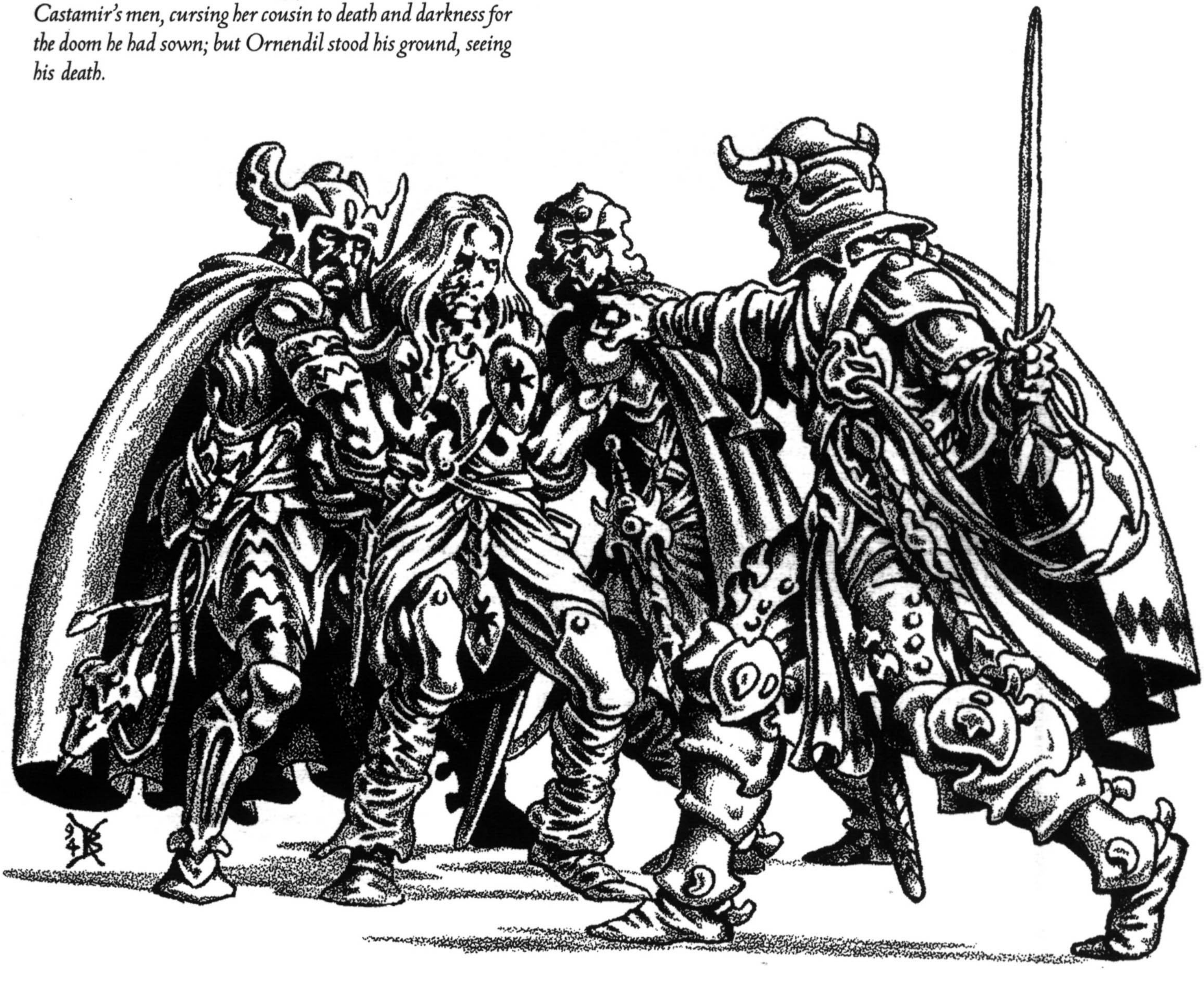
would dissuade us from naming you traitor?" At these words Orodreth grew silent, knowing that he had been betrayed. His treacherous companions smiled at the success of Castamir's design. Mórdulin clutched Ornendil, fearing for the life of her beloved. The fate of Osgiliath hung by a thread.

But Calimon laughed, and mocked his defeated rival. "Come now, Captain of Morthond! What better way to allay our suspicions than by finishing what you have started? Kill Ornendil, or be declared our foe!"

Then Orodreth's heart was smitten as with a blow; and he drew his sword, knowing the evil that he was about to commit for the salvation of Belfalas. For he perceived that, should he failed to comply, Castamir would use his disobedience as a pretext to invade his uncle's fief of Dor-en-Ernil that had remained neutral during the war against Eldacar. Mórdulin was torn screaming from Ornendil's side by Castamir's men, cursing her cousin to death and darkness for the doom he had sown; but Ornendil stood his ground, seeing his death.

"Did I not warn you that the rebels would be your undoing," he said to Orodreth, whose blade wavered. "Now we are both trapped by this usurper's design." But Orodreth, blinded by despair, raised his sword and cried: "Forgive me, Ornendil, and curse my fate!" And he slew the King's son before the people. Then he cast aside his blade and, falling to his knees, raised his eyes to heaven and whispered: "Neithan ni gerino."

Upon witnessing Ornendil's murder, the people of Osgiliath were unable to restrain their wrath and began to attack the rebels in a mad frenzy, only to be slaughtered in heaps upon the steps of the Dome of Stars. Castamir gave orders at once to burn the city and to show no mercy to any who resisted. The Usurper's reign had begun, and the memory of evil would not be forgotten...



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gondor was the rich-flowering legacy of the lost isle of Númenor and without external rival. Yet kingdom it was, and thus dependant upon the bloodline of Anárion, its first absolute King, for stability. When his bloodline was compromised by an heir of Northman descent, the pride of the Dúnedain once again robbed them of irreplacable treasures. From the falls of Rauros to the Havens of Umbar, intrigue and bloodshed became the rule. A usurper claimed the throne, and Gondor turned upon itself. A terrible kin-strife followed, a civil war with no winners, only victors. Yet a tyrant may not long rule people who have been and desire to be free.

ADVENTURE GAMING

The Kin-strife is part of ICE's *Middle-earth®* adventure game series. This collection documents specific time periods, peoples, realms, and strongholds from Tolkien's Middle-earth. Other volumes include ***Arnor™***, ***Dol Guldur™***, ***Elves™***, etc. Each of these works describes notable events, sites, and characters from a host of Endor's most storied locales. This sourcebook details the years of Gondor's civil strife, focusing particularly on the Stone-land's largest cities and the spies, informers, and loyalists struggling against one another in the urban milieu. In addition to covering the history of the time, ***The Kin-strife*** provides numerous adventures and statistical summaries, so you can bring this exciting conflict into your fantasy adventure game.

As you may already know, adventure games include fantasy role playing and simpler story telling games. These games are akin to plays or interactive novels. The referee, or gamemaster, serves as a sort of actor/director, while the players portray the main characters. Everyone combines their imaginative talents to conceive a spontaneous story which is never short of action, intrigue, and adventure. Over the years, gamemasters have chosen Endor, Middle-earth, as the setting for adventure games. No fantasy world exceeds Tolkien's creation in terms of depth, flavor, and consistency—or as an adventure gaming locale.

The Kin-strife serves as a helpful tool for gamemasters and players seeking knowledge about the history of the Dúnedain of the Kingdoms in Exile. It is an ideal reference work for anyone using any major fantasy role playing game guidelines, in particular ICE's *Middle-earth®* series. Those wishing to explore the years of Castamir the Usurper's reign in the context of an adventure game will find this work invaluable.

USING THIS WORK

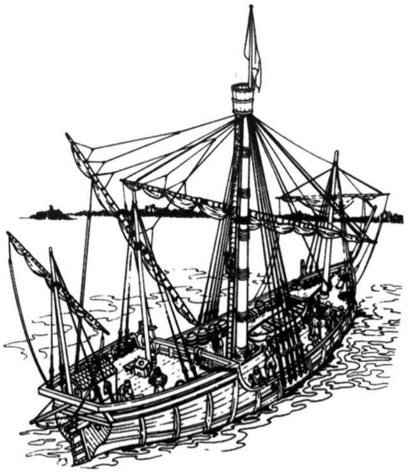
The Kin-strife begins with a comprehensive summary of Gondor's civil war. This section (2.0) covers the roots of the conflict and includes a comprehensive timeline. We then explore the theatre in which the strife unfurls: the cities of the Stone-land (see Sections 3.0 through 8.0). Each of these sections presents an overview of its metropolis, the political and military forces active there, and several adventures that might take place in the area. Section 9.0 consists of three additional adventures that move into Gondor's frontiers, but relate directly to the events of the Kin-strife. Section 10.0 details gamemaster techniques especially useful in the unusual milieu of the civil war. We finish with an array of tables and charts pertaining to ICE's ***Middle-earth Role Playing™***, ***Rolemaster™***, and ***Lord of the Rings Adventure Game™*** systems.

THE SOURCES

This is an authorized secondary work. It is specifically based on ***The Hobbit*** and ***The Lord of the Rings***, and it has been developed so that no conflict exists with any of the other primary publications. Of course, always remember that the ultimate sources of information are the works of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien. Posthumous publications edited by his son Christopher shed additional light on the world of Middle-earth.

The Kin-strife is based on extensive research. We uphold the high standards associated with legacy of J.R.R. Tolkien. By blending material from primary and secondary sources with rational linguistic, cultural, and geological data, we insure that any interpretive material fits into Professor Tolkien's defined patterns and schemes. Keep in mind, however, that this is by no means the "sole official view."

Since we derive the material in ***The Kin-strife*** from authorized sources, we provide citations to pertinent sections in ***The Hobbit*** and ***The Lord of the Rings*** and other major works by J.R.R. Tolkien. Where we have extrapolated information, we either omit citations or we refer to publications in ICE's *Middle-earth* adventure game series.



2.0 THE KIN-STRIFE AND THE USURPER'S REIGN

Between the years 1432 and 1437 of the Third Age, civil war consumed the Dúnadan realm of Gondor. The heir to the winged crown of Anárion was supplanted by rival claimants, and for ten years Gondor endured the rule of a usurper. When the exiled King saw his time, he returned to claim his heritage and defeated his opponent in a great battle.

2.1 GONDOR'S CIVIL WAR

The history of the South-kingdom is nothing less than the history of the decline and fall of the line of Anárion. Gondor's royal house endured for two thousand and fifty years of the Third Age, after which time the realm fell to the rule of hereditary stewards. The civil war of the Kin-strife marked the beginning of this decline, and was the first great evil portending the ultimate demise of Anárion's descendants.

The realm of Gondor began as a realm in exile. Those Dúnedain who called themselves the Faithful fled to the shores of Middle-earth in order to escape the doom of Númenor and the evil into which their homeland had fallen. These exiles sought refuge from their enemies and preservation amid the destruction wrought upon the world by Eru's hand. Their lives were thus spared, but the bounty with which their fathers had been graced was forever lost. Yet, in time, the power of the realm of Gondor began to increase, until the Dúnedain had recovered something of the might and splendor of lost Westernesse; and, looking upon the greatness of their achievements, they judged that the time of their exile was at an end.

Events proved otherwise; for, in the midst of their rejoicing, the heirs of Anárion failed to maintain the power they had inherited, and the enemies of the West began to stir. The waning of Gondor's power did not, however, become apparent to the Dúnedain until the danger was upon them. By then the house of the Kings was already divided, and at variance with itself as to how the might of Gondor should best be preserved. The chief matter of debate was the bond between Gondor and the Northmen.

Some felt that the fate of Gondor rested with the alliance and friendship of the free men of the North. For those of this mind, even union between the line of Anárion and the Princes of Rhovanion was not too great a price to pay for peace and security. Many, though, considered the house of the Kings thus compromised, and the grace of its longevity threatened; for in the integrity of Dúnadan lineage (they claimed) lay the salvation of the realm. But the testimony of the Kin-strife bears witness rather to the inevitable diminishment of a fallen world which, through force of arms and spilling of blood, the Secondborn may hasten but never hinder.

2.1.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

The Kin-strife was born of a marriage between Valacar—the twentieth King of Gondor—and Vidumavi, the daughter of the most powerful Northman Prince. Eldacar was the child of this union. Many in Gondor who were descended by blood from the house of the Kings opposed Eldacar's claim to the throne because of his mixed parentage. When his father died, war erupted in the South-kingdom; but the roots of this conflict, and the factors which enabled it, run far deeper than events first suggest.

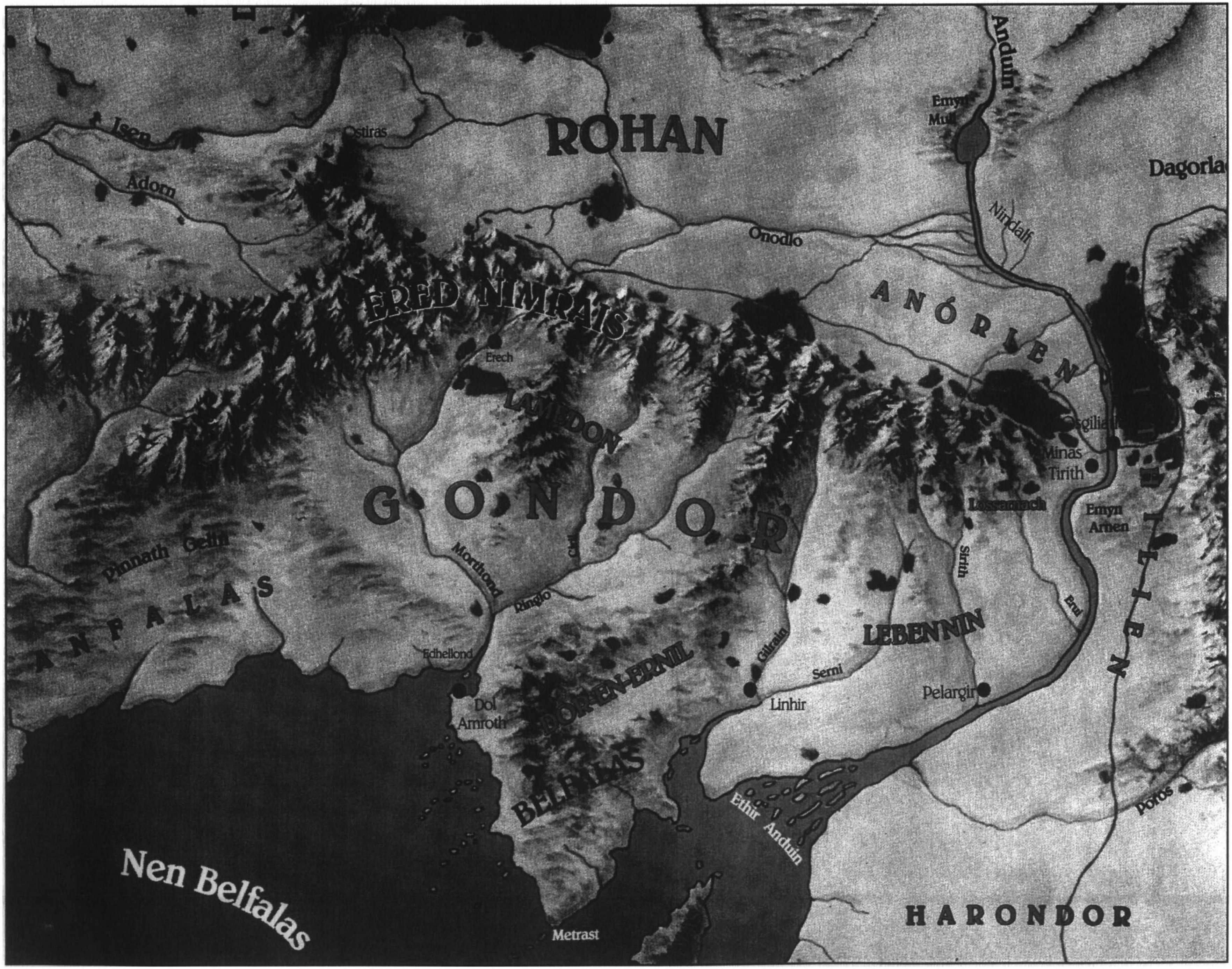
Two factors decided the outcome of the Kin-strife: the command of the fleets, and the support of the people of the coasts and of the great havens of Pelargir and Umbar. Castamir the Usurper held both. In order to appreciate the importance of this fact, you must first understand the history of Gondor's naval supremacy in Belfalas Bay.

THE SHIP-KINGS AND THE EXPANSION OF GONDOR

At the time of Gondor's founding in S.A. 3320, the Faithful who dwelt in the lands that look upon the Bay of Belfalas were organized into a defensive league of communities under the primacy of Pelargir. The Pelargirean League retained its independence under Elendil's sons, sending aid in time of war and deferring inter-communal disputes to the arbitration of the Kings. By the eighth century of the Third Age, however, the military resources of the league proved inadequate for maintaining civil harmony within and between its member communities, and the Council of Pelargir called upon the Kings to restore order by direct military intervention.

The considerable loss of Dúnedain during the war of the Last Alliance led to a more frequent incidence of intermarriage with the subject Daen population over the next seven hundred years. Because the purity of blood lineage was the overarching criterion for citizen status, this widespread dilution of bloodlines precipitated a political crisis within the federated communities of the league. The extension of citizenship and its privileges to an ever-widening circle threatened the exclusivity of the Dúnadan elite. At the same time, attempts to further limit and restrict citizen status threatened the mixed-blooded majority with subject status and a loss of political rights.

Internally fractured by divisions, and unable to contain the threat of revolt arising from both elite and populist factions, leaders of the league came to realize that only the King of Gondor was capable of mustering a host large enough to impose lasting order among its member communities. These circumstances led to the consolidation of royal dominion west and south of the Mouths of Anduin, beginning with the reign of Siriondil, the eleventh King (T.A. 748-830). Siriondil delegated to his son Tarannon the power to muster the feudal levies and allies of Gondor for the defense of Dúnadan citizens formerly allied to Pelargir, naming him "Captain of the Hosts."



ROHAN
Anduin
Emyn Muil
Dagorla
Isen
Ostiras
Adorn
Nindalf
Onodlo
ERED NIMRAIS
ANÓRIEN
Erech
LAMEDON
Osgiliath
Minas Tirith
GONDOR
Lossarnach
Emyn Arnen
ITHILIEN
Pinnath Gelin
Morthond
Ciril
Ringlo
Sirith
Erui
ANFALAS
Edhellond
LEBENNIN
Gilrain
Serni
Linhir
Pelargir
DOR-EN-ERNIL
Dol Amroth
BELFALAS
Ethir Anduin
Poros
Nen Belfalas
Metrast
HARONDOR

Beginning with Tarannon's nephew and successor Eärnil, the rank of Captain of the Hosts was conferred by the King to his eldest son, and the haven of Pelargir became the traditional residence for the heir of Anárion until he should take up the crown of his father. Both Eärnil's son Ciryandil and his grandson Ciryaher continued the building of ships in Pelargir and the war in Harad, until all the lands between Umbar and the Ethir were finally brought under the dominion of Gondor in the year 1050. Atanatar II and Narmacil his son both followed in the office of their fathers. Harondor, the coast of Harad, and Umbar were all ruled by captains directly appointed and controlled by the Captain of the Hosts at Pelargir. This ordering of naval power, set in motion by Eärnil in 831, endured for four hundred and nine years of the Third Age.

Narmacil took the crown in the year 1226 and effected a change in this tradition which was to have profound consequences for the realm of Gondor. Childless, he left Pelargir in the hands of one of his lieutenants, until an heir should be chosen. In the year 1240, Narmacil anointed his brother Calmacil; but Calmacil was not of a military bent, and ill-suited to the rule of the fleets. Calmacil's elder son Minalcar was a better choice, and might have received the appointment as Narmacil's heir, had not the threat to Gondor shifted to the North.

In the same year Calmacil received his brother's blessing, Wild Men of the East moved westward out of the plains beyond the Inland Sea. They began attacking Gondor's northern marches and, in response, Narmacil created the office of Regent of the Realm. He conferred it upon Minalcar. Because the hosts of Gondor were now divided on two fronts, the office of Captain of the Hosts was abolished. The King created a new position, the "Captain of Ships," conferring the title on the master of the Gondorian fleets. The Regent assumed exclusive prerogative over land forces, as well as the authority to act in the name of the King in matters of government.

Traditionally, the King's eldest son ruled Pelargir, but this practice had to be abandoned. Instead, Narmacil elevated Calimehtar—the Regent's younger brother—to the new captaincy. The appointment spawned tragic consequences. By severing the link between the rule of the haven and the royal succession, the King unwittingly provided both a foundation and a means for future succession challenges arising from a different branch of Anárion's line. Calimehtar and his descendants did not overlook this new opportunity to contest their cousins' rightful claim to the throne.

RHOVANION AND THE NORTHMAN

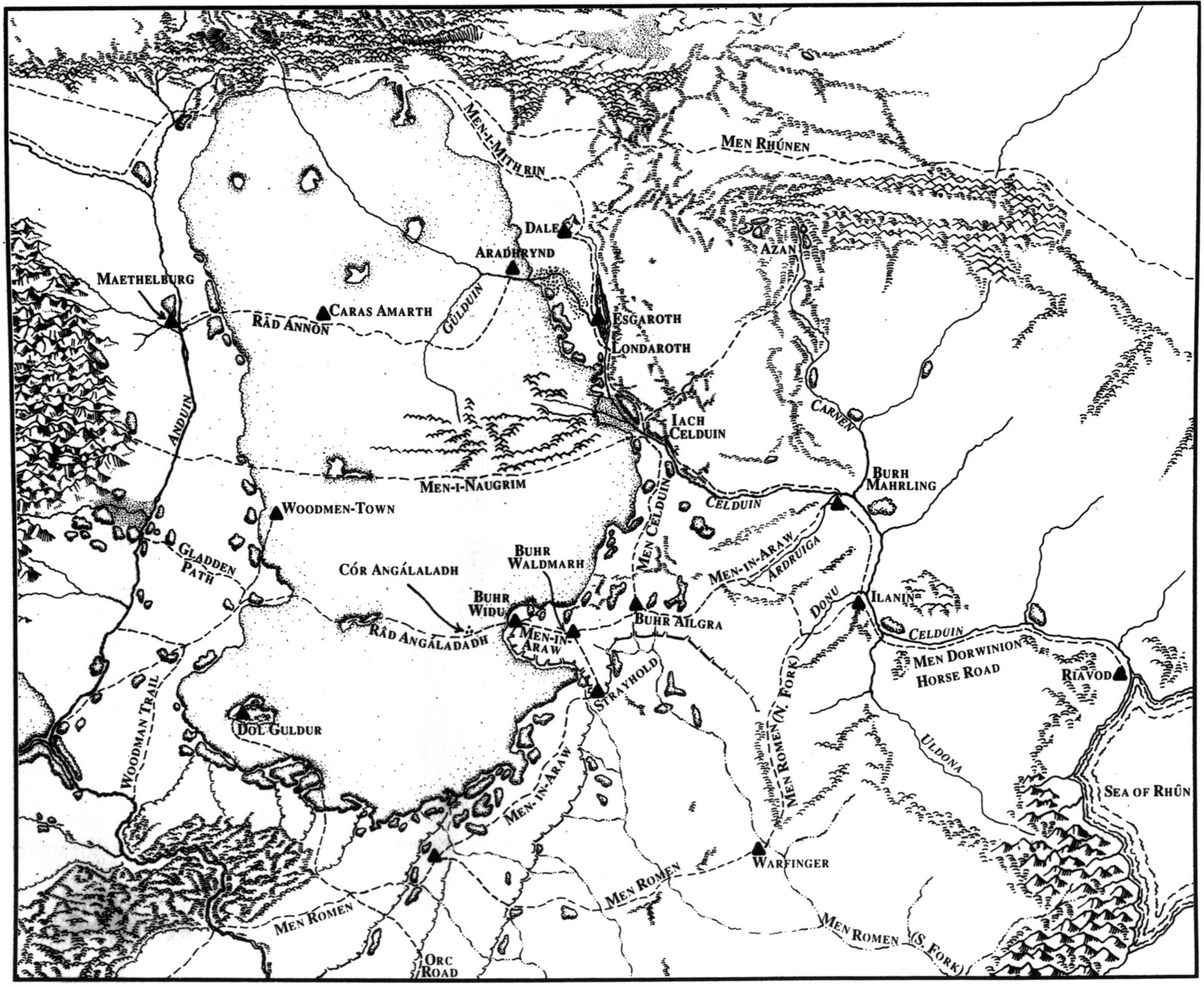
In the year 541, Turambar—the ninth King of Gondor—vanquished the men of the East and secured all the territory between Anduin and the Inland Sea of Rhûn. He granted these lands in perpetuity to the Northmen of Rhovanion, fast allies who occupied them on behalf of the Gondorian Kings. In the peace that followed, the Northmen grew in numbers and became a great people; but in time the lands they had been given proved too small to provide equally for all, and their Princes fell to feuding among themselves.

In 1240, Easterlings from beyond the Inland Sea again migrated into Rhovanion and began threatening Gondor. Disunified, the Northman Princes did little to hinder this advance. Instead, many sought to ally themselves with the newcomers against their own enemies, or even to join in the spoil of Gondor for personal gain. Vidugavia, who was the most powerful of these Princes and had aspirations for supremacy, sent word of this situation to Minalcar in Gondor. He offered the young Regent military assistance. Minalcar accepted and, together, their hosts drove the Easterlings out of Rhovanion, destroying all of their settlements east of the Sea in 1248.

In return for these services, Minalcar recognized Vidugavia's claim to kingship over all the Northman Princes. This the Regent did in part out of necessity, for he needed someone to maintain order beyond the Anduin. This was especially important in light of the growing threat posed by Minalcar's own brother, Calimehtar. By recognizing Vidugavia's royal claims, Minalcar counterbalanced Calimehtar's strength and guaranteed the continued support of Rhovanion for himself and his descendants. This bond was further strengthened by the betrothal of Vidugavia's daughter, Vidumavi, to the Regent's own son, Valacar. While at first this union was little to Minalcar's liking—who was discomforted by the opposition from many of the Gondorian people—the marriage proved sound and did much to promote friendship between the two allies.

Following the imposition of order in Rhovanion, Minalcar turned his thoughts to the internal stability of his own realm. Atanatar, his grandfather, had recalled a large portion of the provincial and territorial bureaucracies, restoring power to the local Dúnadan elite that had once held sway under the Pelargirean League. Minalcar believed that this act was a grave political mistake, because it surrendered too much power and resources to groups whose already overbearing positions within their own communities had first precipitated the need for royal dominion. The resurgence of local power aggravated the military crisis that led to the division of the hosts in 1240.

Accordingly, Minalcar resolved in 1250 to recruit a new royal bureaucracy from among the ranks of the Northmen who had entered into his service after the war in Rhovanion. By his authority as ruling Regent, Minalcar reinstated royal administrative control in Anfalas, Linhir, South Ithilien, and Harondor, once again displacing resentful parochial oligarchs. These proud Dúnadan elites turned their allegiance to the disenchanted Captain of Ships in Pelargir, who championed the "old order." Like most of their less affluent kinsmen throughout the southern provinces, the local lords viewed these forcible political rearrangements as unjust and oppressive intrusions into local affairs. And, the prospect of a half-Northman heir to Valacar boded even worse to come in the future.


Men Rhúnen
Men-i-Mithrin
Dale
Azan
Aradhrynd
Maethelburg
Caras Amarth
Râd Annon
Gûlduin
Esgaroth
Londaroth
Anduin
Iach Celduin
Carnen
Burh Mahrling
Men-i-Naugrim
Woodmen-Town
Celduin
Men Celduin
Men-in-Araw
Ardruiga
Gladden Path
Buhr Waldmarh
Cór Angálaladh
Buhr Widu
Donu
Ilanin
Râd Angáladadh
Men-in-Araw
Buhr Ailgra
Celduin
Men Dorwinion Horse Road
Riavod
Woodman Trail
Strayhold
Men Romen (N. Fork)
Dol Guldur
Uldona
Sea of Rhûn
Men-in-Araw
Warfinger
Men Romen
Men Romen
Men Romen (S. Fork)
Orc Road

2.1.2 THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CROWN

Minalcar took the crown in the name of Rómendacil II and was, in turn, succeeded by Valacar. Valacar had a son by Vidumavi whom he named Eldacar. When the King declared Eldacar his chosen heir, there was much unrest in Gondor. This opposition took organized form in the so-called "traditionalist confederacy," a revival of the formerly federated communities of the old Pelargirean League.

The Traditionalist Confederacy

Those descendants of the Kings who struggled to depose Eldacar during the Kin-strife named themselves "traditionalists," justifying their rebellion as a defense of the line of Anárion. Each of the confederate leaders commanded followings among the people. Castamir, the Captain of the Ships and master of Pelargir, prevailed in the end over his confederates because he had the greatest following; but divisions among the traditionalists persisted. Unceasing labor was needed on the part of Calimehtar's descendants to preserve the fragile coalition on which Castamir's continued power rested.

Everyone in the South-kingdom revered the line of Anárion, but most questioned the wisdom of Valacar's choice of Eldacar as his heir. Still, their misgivings were hardly sufficient to precipitate open rebellion against a lawfully recognized King. The true roots of the traditionalist confederacy lay rather in a new vision of Gondor no longer as a Realm-in-Exile, but as Númenor recovered. It was this belief which united those opposed to Eldacar's succession.

This vision of an end to the Exile came into its fullness under Hyarmendacil, whose destruction of the lords of Umbar signified for many the final victory of the Faithful over the legacy of Black Númenor. The scourge which had brought about the doom of their homeland had at last been vanquished from the Circles of the World, and the noontide of Westernesse would be theirs once again. The ancient war was over.

This euphoria conveniently served the interests of Calimehtar and his captains, whose coffers were greatly enlarged by the new revenues and tolls levied on the people of the coasts, and by the tribute that flowed from Gondor's newly acquired client-kingdoms in Harad. Greedy merchants sought out the patronage of Pelargir to win trading privileges, while local potentates competed for tax farming rights over their subject populations. But much of the vast wealth that parted hands with the disenfranchised never reached the court of Osgiliath, but was instead funneled off by a self-aggrandizing bureaucracy in the service of the Captain of Ships.

In 1366, King Valacar had little cause to rejoice. He perceived the continuing threats from the East and recognized the growing power of Calimehtar's descendants. Valacar knew that the Exile was not yet at an end. Alliance with the Northmen of Rhovanion was the Dúnedain's best security. For the King in Osgiliath, Eldacar's succession was therefore a necessity. Unfortunately, for those who remained deluded by the might of the South-kingdom—especially those living in the protected confines beside Belfalas Bay—Valacar's decision was perceived as a direct attack on Gondor's very destiny. Fear and discontent clouded their perceptions. Revolt was at hand, awaiting a final catalyst: the ambitious Castamir. When news of Valacar's death came to Pelargir, the Captain of Ships saw that the time had come to transform smoldering discontent into open war.

The Neutrality of Belfalas

The Prince of Belfalas, the Lord of Dor-en-Ernil (S. "Land of the Prince"), had been close in friendship and counsel to the House of the Kings since the days of Elendil. The descendants of Prince Edhelion enjoyed a special status, for their home at Lond Ernil predated the South-kingdom. Loyal, grateful, comfortable, and ever-practical, they sought to avert the possibility of civil war in Gondor. For this reason both Prince Adrazôr and his grandfather made defensive marriage alliances with Calimehtar's descendants, in order to position Edhelion's House as a mediating force between Pelargir and Osgiliath, as well as a check on the power of the royal fleet in Belfalas Bay.

Despite the extreme purity of his lineage and his considerable influence with both factions, the labors of the Prince proved vain. War erupted anyway, enen reaching some of the territories governed by Lond Ernil. The subsequent suffering was aggravated by Adrazôr's policies of mediation and conciliation, which brought Dor-en-Ernil to the brink of destruction. Because he had given his daughter Lóthriel in marriage to Castamir's son, the Prince found himself unable to take action against the Captain of Ships in the ensuing conflict; nor could he commit Dor-en-Ernil to the traditionalist cause, because of his oaths of faith to Valacar. Non-involvement proved to be the only open course, even though it meant drawing the enmity of both sides upon Belfalas. Inaction also bred discontent among the people of Dor-en-Ernil and, in 1432, forces in Linhir disobeyed the Prince's command and joined the traditionalist confederacy.

Neutrality in Belfalas nevertheless served a blow to the progress of the rebellion. After all, the Prince was capable of fielding the only significant force of mounted Dúnedain within the South-kingdom. The knights of Edhelion were unrivaled by any other company in Gondor. Castamir desperately needed their services, for the Prince's Requain served as the only effective counterweight against Eldacar's Northman cavalry. Instead, the knights prevented the confederate leaders from openly opposing Adrazôr's resolution to withdraw from the Kin-strife.

The Course of the War

Following the death of Valacar in T.A. 1432, the confederate leaders demanded Eldacar's immediate abdication, purposing to name a lawful successor by the authority of the Council of Gondor. Upon Eldacar's rejection of these terms, the traditionalists gathered to themselves their allies, and prepared to march on Osgiliath to depose the new King by force. Eldacar sought to muster an offensive against the ranks of the confederates, but the neutrality of Belfalas and of Minas Anor, and the small numbers of those that came to his call from Anórien, Calenardhon, and Rhovanion, constrained the King to establish a defensive line along the Erui and to fortify both sides of the Anduin. Although Minas Ithil was seized by rebels within its walls, the northward advance of the confederates was for a time hindered.

Rebel forces breached the Erui defenses in the spring of the following year, and the confederates landed forces behind King's lines in Anórien and Ithilien. In response, the Prince-president of Minas Anor barred the passage of the Pelennor on the western bank, while hill-forts in the Emyn Arnen shut the rebels out of North Ithilien. His swift moves forced both sides to prepare for an extended conflict.

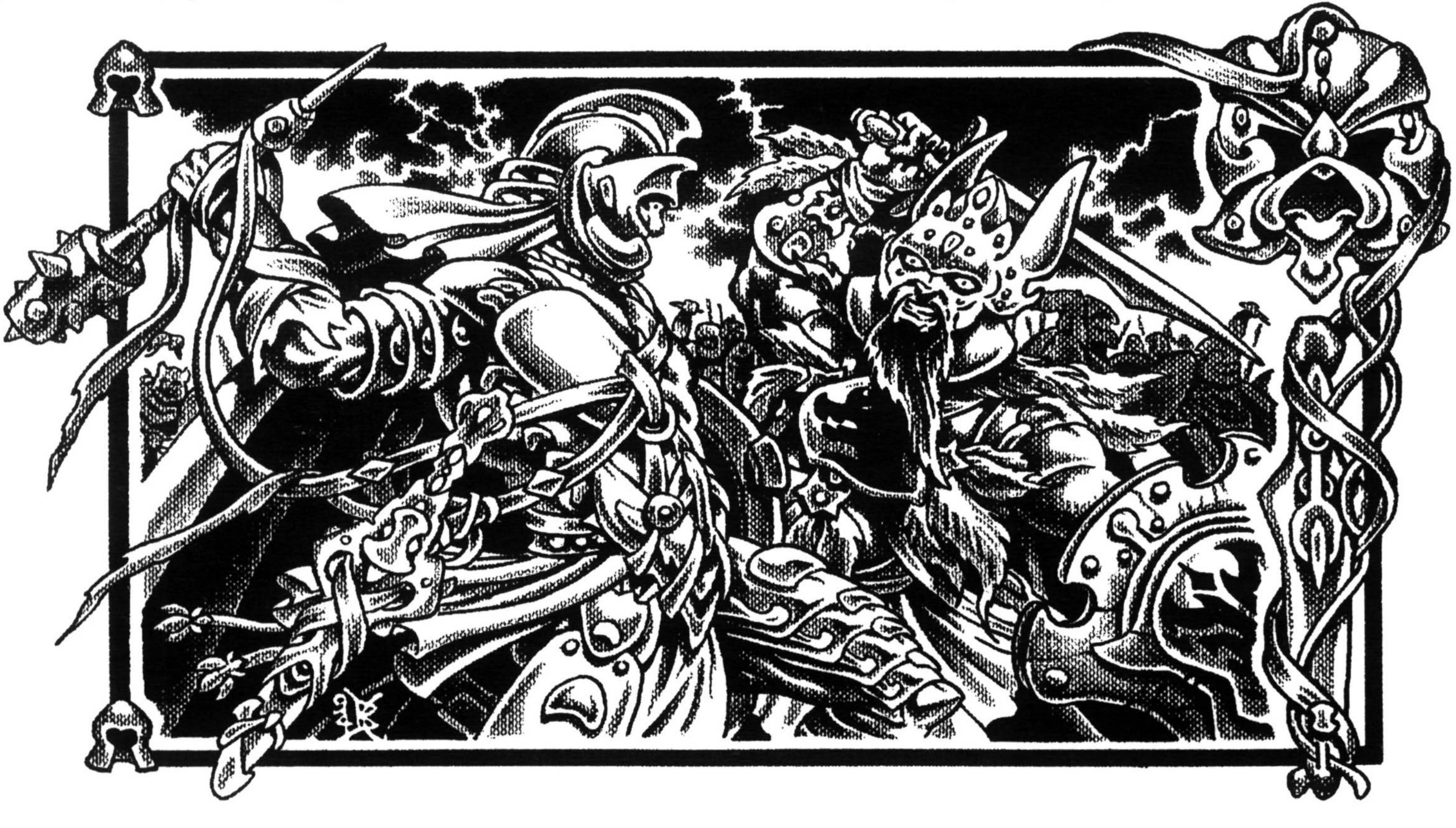
Eldacar's men held the heights of Emyn Arnen against the rebels for four years. In the end, though, the confederates seized the strategic hills with great loss. Sensing utter defeat, the Conclave of Minas Anor sided with the traditionalists, surrendering to them the western approach to Osgiliath in the autumn of 1437.

The Siege and Burning of Osgiliath

The royal seat of the South-kingdom had not been built to withstand a prolonged siege. Minas Anor and Minas Ithil had always served this function. Thus, when the western bank of the Anduin opened to the confederates, the fate of the new King was sealed. Eldacar possessed neither the numbers nor adequate provisions to indefinitely withstand the rebels. He held out just long enough to organize the evacuation of his supporters. Within a few months, his enemies broke the defenses of the western city. On 12 Narbeleth, the retreat began.

Eldacar's eldest son, Ornendil, commanded the rear guard that held the Great Bridge against the foe, while the retreating King and those willing to follow him into exile made their escape into North Ithilien. As they took flight, Orodreth of Morthond won the passage of the river and gracefully took Ornendil captive; for he knew that the King's son was well-loved by the people of Osgiliath and that, were Ornendil to be taken alive and shown mercy, the royal seat would be surrendered to the confederates without further bloodshed.

Afterwards, some of the rebel captains led by one of Castamir's cousins conspired to blacken Orodreth's name, and to make him into a scapegoat for the evils that were to follow. When Ornendil was brought before the captains for judgment, Orodreth found himself accused of possible treason and was ordered to execute the King's son or be declared their enemy. For the sake of his honor and the preservation of his house, Orodreth was forced to slay Ornendil. Upon witnessing the murder of their beloved



Eldacar in melee against Castamir

captain, the people of Osgiliath rose up in outrage against the rebels, and Castamir ordered them slaughtered and the city put to the torch wherever his men met with resistance. This evil was remembered in Minas Anor and in Ithilien, and among the survivors was bred an undying hatred for the Captain of Ships.

The Council of Gondor proclaimed Castamir its twenty-second King on the sixth day in the month of Hithui, 1437. Eldacar, his exiled supporters, and his surviving family received word in their refuge in Rhovanion. There, Eldacar's mother's kinsman, King Vidurafin, provided them with safe harbor. Taking sanctuary at Buhr Widu, Eldacar swore vengeance against his usurper and contemplated his return.

2.1.3 THE FALL OF CASTAMIR

Although he could hold the fleets to his will, Castamir proved to be a haughty and ungenerous ruler. Refusing to repair the ruin he had brought upon Osgiliath, the Usurper proposed to remove the royal seat to his own haven of Pelargir, leaving the former capital a vast shanty designed to house his many enemies. By the fourth year of his reign, the King's exclusive patronage of the coastal provinces led to widespread discontent elsewhere in the realm, while his unsound fiscal and monetary policies consigned many of his subjects to poverty.

An increase of popular unrest and loyalist resistance resulted in increased disdain for the Usurper after 1441. Civil unrest even struck Lebennin, where a self-aggrandizing administrative elite succeeded in blinding their King to the sufferings of his own people. Between 1443 and 1444, a growing decline in military recruitment forced the Castamir's captains to rely more and more on mercenary elements, whose treatment of the realm as "conquered territory" only worked to confirm and strengthen resistance to the Usurper's wardship.

Rumors began to circulate in the autumn of 1446 that the exiled Eldacar was gathering a great host in Rhovanion to liberate Gondor from the his rival's clutches. To counter the threat of such an invasion, Castamir ordered portions of the garrisons at Minas Anor and Minas Ithil into the Morannon in mid-Girithron; however, they were recalled a week later after Minas Ithil arose in open revolt.

Tensions between the inhabitants of that city and its resident mercenaries escalated into a riot. The population was supported by the majority of the regular garrison. They annihilated the remaining troops in a vicious struggle which lasted for three days. Companies returning from the Morannon to suppress the uprising were harassed throughout their journey across Forithilien and the Emyn Arnen, but they brought fire and rapine upon those that stood in their path. Many others discontented with the Usurper's reign looked upon the slaughter as evidence of Castamir's unrestrained brutality and joined the general revolt spreading throughout Calenardhon and Anórien. By early T.A. 1447, all of northern Gondor was gripped by another rebellion.

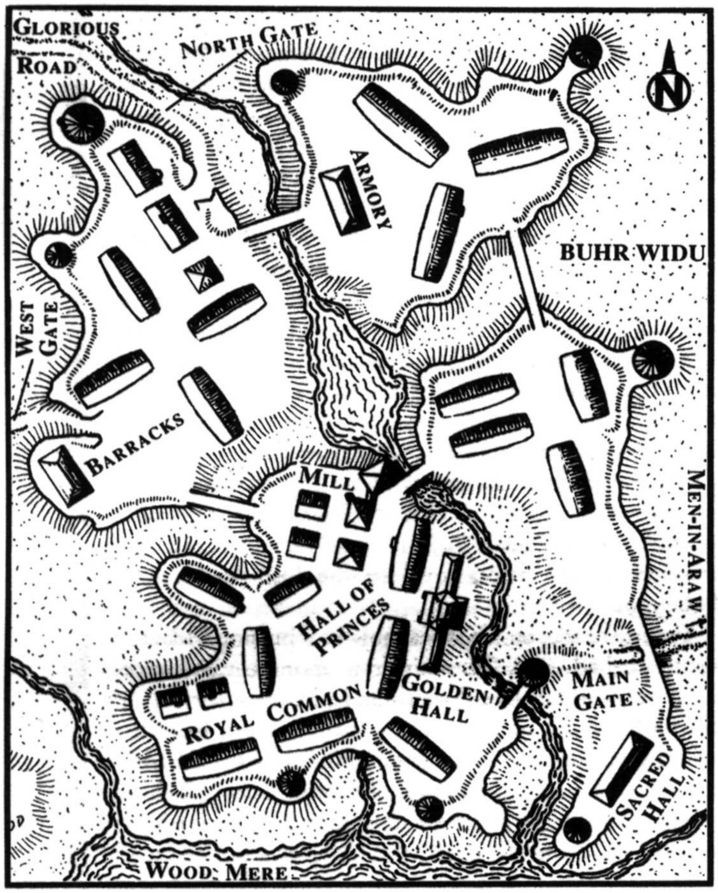
Eldacar seized the moment and led his host out of Rhovanion. A detachment was left to besiege the Morannon in order to prevent any interference from its garrison, while the main force marched south into Ithilien, crossing the Anduin at Cair Andros and finding great support among the folk of Anórien. Eldacar's army reached the Noeg Echor of Minas Anor late in Gwirith.

The Conclave sought to repeat its strategy of neutrality, but the Usurper's garrison thwarted this decision by deposing its members, who were either slain or imprisoned. The people of Minas Anor rose up in defense of the Conclave and attacked the garrison, while Coratar's loyalists took control of the Great Gate, sending to Eldacar for aid. The returning King responded by dispatching a large force from Anórien, which defeated Castamir's garrison and assumed control of the city. Hearing of the capture of Minas Anor, Dor-en-Ernil declared its allegiance to Eldacar and Edhelion's small but elite army soon crushed all the forces loyal to the Usurper west of Lebennin.

Frantic to muster a host capable of repulsing Eldacar's southward advance, Castamir drew upon his vast mercenary reservoirs in Enedhwaith and Harad—forces paid for with the aid of compulsory loans exacted from the wealthy manor-folk of Lebennin. He readied this hastily assembled force by the month of Nórui. Leaving behind a small company to guard Linhir and the Gilrain fords against Edhelion's Requain, the Usurper advanced with his forces to the Crossings of Erui. There, Castamir met Eldacar: the King fielding the greater force, the Usurper holding the stronger position.

Victory came late in the day, when Eldacar led an Éothraim charge that broke his opponent's left flank. The Usurper with his guard strove to block this assault, meeting his enemy sword to sword, but he fell beneath Eldacar's blade. Seeing the death of their liege, Castamir's host disintegrated and abandoned the field. Thus was Eldacar avenged for the death of Ornendil and the usurpation of his inheritance.

Castamir had ruled the South-kingdom for nearly ten years, and with his fall was spilt much of the best blood of Gondor. The Dúnedain of the South would never recover from the destruction wrought by these fifteen years of civil war and oppression, the first of the three Great Evils which were to plague the Faithful in their exile. Castamir's was an awful legacy for, though the Usurper was no more, the traditionalist confederacy that had won him the winged crown of Anárion yet endured, and fled besiegement at Pelargir with all of the fleets to establish themselves in Umbar... But that is, as they say, another story.



Buhr Widu

2.1.4 THE TALE OF YEARS

The course of the Kin-strife and the Usurper's reign is summarized in the following timeline, which includes a chronology of the events which precipitated the civil war. Developments subsequent to Eldacar's recovery of the crown in 1447 will be detailed in the forthcoming Umbar and Southern Gondor realm modules.

748-830 Tarannon is appointed Captain of the Hosts under his father Siriondil, and extends the sway of Gondor along the coasts, west and south of the Mouths of Anduin.

830-913 Tarannon takes the crown in the name of Falastur, and passes the office of Captain to his nephew and heir, Eärnil, who continues the consolidation of provincial territories.

913-933 Eärnil succeeds Tarannon, repairs the haven of Pelargir, and builds a great navy.

933 Eärnil invests Umbar as a fortress of Gondor.

1050 Ciryaher Hyarmendacil subjects the coastlands between Umbar and the Ethir, destroying the Black Númenórean hegemony over Harad. Gondor is declared the Image of Númenor recovered.

1240 The rule of the South-kingdom is entrusted to Minalcar as Regent, while the office of Captain of the Hosts is transformed into that of Captain of Ships. Minalcar's brother, Calimehtar, receives this office. Subsequently, the wardship of Pelargir is separated from the royal succession.

1248 Minalcar joins forces with the Northman Prince Vidugavia and drives the Easterlings out of Rhovanion.

1250 Vidugavia claims the kingship of Rhovanion and is recognized by the embassy of Minalcar's son, Valacar.

1264 Valacar weds the daughter of Vidugavia.

1274 Castamir and Eldacar are born.

1366 Valacar becomes King.

1370 Calimir becomes Captain of Ships.

1384 Calimir dies and Castamir succeeds him.

1432 Valacar dies and Eldacar claims the succession. The traditionalists demand his abdication but are rejected. The Kin-strife begins.

1433-1436 The confederates breach the defenses of Erui and land infantry forces behind Eldacar's lines in Anórien and Ithilien, but are held back by the Conclave of Minas Anor and the hill-forts of the Emyn Arnen. Minor campaigns are fought for the control of Gondor's outlying regions (with the exception of Belfalas). Both sides vie for the support of Minas Anor.

1437 The Conclave declares its allegiance to the confederates, opening the western bank of the Anduin for the rebel forces. Osgiliath is besieged and taken, while Eldacar escapes to his kinsfolk in Rhovanion. The Council of Gondor proclaims Castamir the twenty-second King of Gondor.

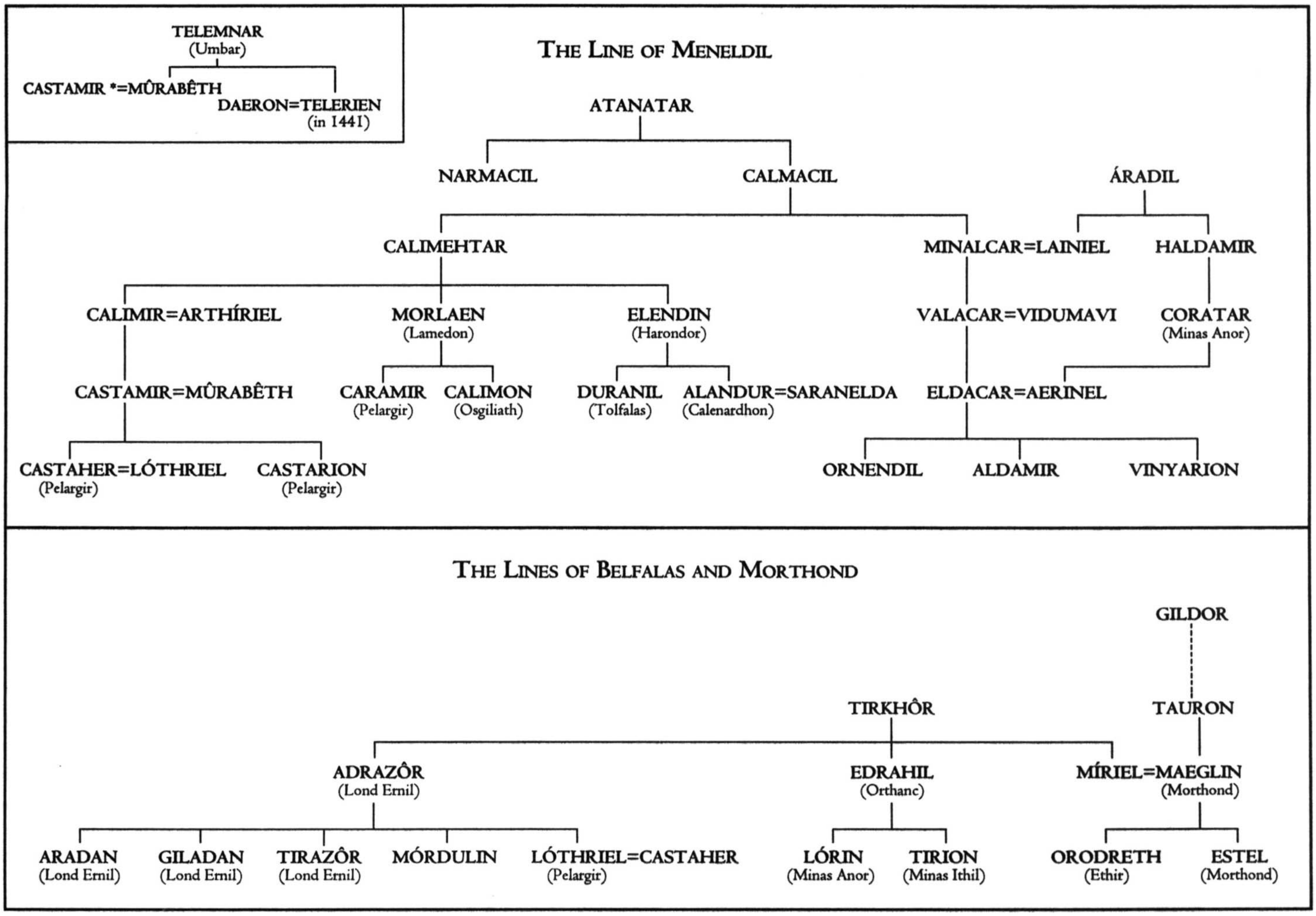
1438-1439 The exiled King receives sanctuary at Buhr Widu in Rhovanion and begins to gather to himself supporters defecting from Gondor, the greater part of which is now subject to the Usurper's forces.

1441 Castamir begins laying plans to formally move the royal seat to Pelargir. Prices have doubled from inflation since the war, and the King's favor for the coastal provinces breeds discontent elsewhere in the realm. [The adventures included in this module are nominally set in this year.]

1443-1444 Deepening resentment for Castamir necessitates a greater reliance on mercenary strength to enforce the Usurper's will. Loyalist sentiment grows as a result of increasing tension between the populace and this foreign military element.

1446 Rumors of Eldacar's return from Rhovanion spark open rebellion against Castamir in Ithilien, Anórien, and Calenardhon.

1447 Eldacar mobilizes his allies and marches on Gondor. He is supported by an uprising in Minas Anor, which opens the road into Lebennin. The Usurper meets his advance at the Crossings of Erui but is slain. Castamir's supporters abandon the field and are besieged in Pelargir. Eldacar is once again proclaimed King.


TELEMNAR
(Umbar)
CASTAMIR *=MÛRABÊTH
DAERON=TELERIEN
(in 1441)
THE LINE OF MENELDIL
ATANATAR
NARMACIL
CALMACIL
ÁRADIL
CALIMEHTAR
MINALCAR=LAINIEL
HALDAMIR
CALIMIR=ARTHÍRIEL
MORLAEN
(Lamedon)
ELENDIN
(Harondor)
VALACAR=VIDUMAVI
CORATAR
(Minas Anor)
CASTAMIR=MÛRABÊTH
CARAMIR
(Pelargir)
CALIMON
(Osgiliath)
DURANIL
(Tolfalas)
ALANDUR=SARANELDA
(Calenardhon)
ELDACAR=AERINEL
CASTAHER=LÓTHRIEL
(Pelargir)
CASTARION
(Pelargir)
ORNENDIL
ALDAMIR
VINYARION
THE LINES OF BELFALAS AND MORTHOND
GILDOR
TIRKHÔR
TAURON
ADRAZÔR
(Lond Ernil)
EDRAHIL
(Orthanc)
MÍRIEL=MAEGLIN
(Morthond)
ARADAN
(Lond Ernil)
GILADAN
(Lond Ernil)
TIRAZÔR
(Lond Ernil)
MÓRDULIN
LÓTHRIEL=CASTAHER
(Pelargir)
LÓRIN
(Minas Anor)
TIRION
(Minas Ithil)
ORODRETH
(Ethir)
ESTEL
(Morthond)

Genealogy of the Kin-strife

2.2 THE USURPER'S REIGN

Castamir did not win the crown of the South-kingdom by chance, nor does he rule over his realm by universal consent. The Usurper's reign stands or falls on the basis of several interlocking factors—kinship and patronage networks, administrative and legal structures, military control, and political and economic relations with other realms. An understanding of these factors is the beginning of wisdom for those who would see King Castamir remain in power, or equally for those who would see a tyrant overthrown.

2.2.1 THE LINE OF CALIMEHTAR

The outcome of the Kin-strife cannot be adequately explained unless Castamir is understood as representing and advancing the power interests of the descendants of Calimehtar. When Calimehtar was made Captain of Ships in Pelargir in the year 1240, his chief desire was to preserve and extend his royal lineage. In this way he hoped that his own descendants might one day be in a position to claim the crown for themselves. Calimehtar achieved this purpose in two ways: marriage alliance and the appointment of kinsmen to naval office.

At the time of Valacar's death, the line of Calimehtar controlled both Lebennin and Lamedon, as well as all of the coastlands south of Ethir Anduin to Umbar. Castamir's primary goal as the Gondorian monarch is to complete the consolidation of the realm by his house and its clients. In view of this objective, his greatest threat comes from the princely line of Belfalas, whose power he must continually check through the tenuous marriage tie of his eldest son. Because kinship is a double-edged sword, constraining the aspirations of both households, the Usurper seeks underhanded means to circumvent these strictures that protect Belfalas.

Castamir does not ultimately survive the legacy of the Kin-strife, but his own descendants led by his two sons eventually establish themselves in Umbar as independent lords and make the haven a refuge for all the enemies of the King, until their final destruction at the hands of Telumehtar three ward and sixty-two years later. Between the end of the Usurper's reign and the annihilation of Castamir's last descendants, two generations of Calimehtar's line pass away: Castamaitë son of Castaher, and his own sons Angamaitë and Sangahyando. The line of Calimehtar thus endures five ward and seventy years, spanning a total of six generations.

King Castamir (1274-1447†)

Although called by his enemies "the Usurper," Castamir is nevertheless recognized as the legitimate, twenty-second King of Gondor. He is Castamir son of Calimir, who in turn was the elder son and heir of Calimehtar. Calimir died in 1384, leaving to his son the inheritance of his office and rank in Pelargir and, forty-eight years later, Castamir called upon the fleets to support him as King.

In order to guarantee unity among his house Calimir, upon succeeding his father in 1370, transferred the Southern Division of the fleets from the rule of Morlaen his brother to his own son Castamir, who served his father in Umbar fourteen years. During this sojourn, the young Castamir distinguished himself as an effective captain, forging successful personal alliances among the people of the fleets.

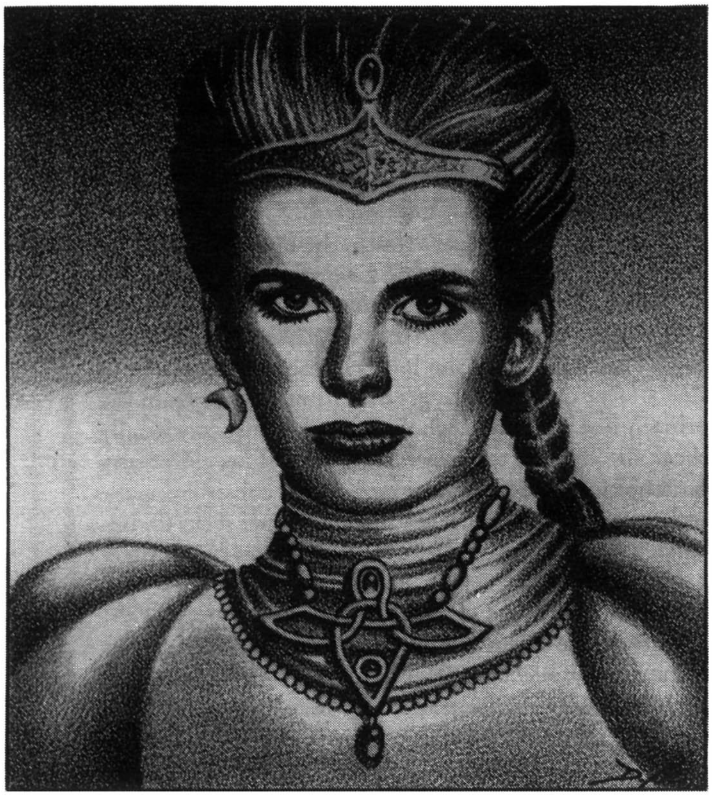
One such alliance led to his marriage to the Lady Mûrabêth in the year 1376. As the daughter of Telemnar, one of Calimir's lieutenants, Mûrabêth's union with the future King would win for her father command of the Southern Division when Castamir returned to Pelargir only eight years later. This union between the line of Calimehtar and Telemnar's house ensured for Castamir the support of Umbar and the coasts in the struggle for the throne.

As Lord-captain of Umbar, Castamir was also instrumental in forging the league of Southron Kings which was to rule over the Harad during his reign. By this deed, he renewed Gondor's traditional hegemony in the south through its patronage and support of local dynasts, thereby securing Umbar and Harondor as outlets for landward trade and establishing a reservoir of military support in the event of a civil war.

Castamir is driven and inspired by the legacy of the Ship-kings, and purposes to redeem Gondor from the threat of decline under Valacar. This consuming ambition has made him haughty and ungenerous towards many of his subjects. Convictions about the righteousness of his cause have also led him to commit excesses unbefitting of an heir of Anárion, but Castamir is willing to sacrifice land and lives to achieve his goal.

Castamir's sea-grey eyes and dark hair reflect the lineage of his mother's folk in Belfalas. He is tall and proud, but the heritage of his blood is unable to hide his cruel nature. Castamir wears the winged crown of Anárion at all times when in public, though he retains the livery of Pelargir on his surcoat.

Queen Mûrabêth



Queen Mûrabêth (1311-1546)

Castamir's Queen is a fair and noble lady by all accounts. Her marriage was arranged by Calimir at the behest of her father. Since that time, she has borne her husband two sons: Castaher and Castarion. Mûrabêth remained in Pelargir during the Kin-strife, and now looks to the day when the Council of Gondor will recognize her home as the royal seat. Until that day, the Queen will continue to reside in the house of the Captain of Ships.

Although faithful to her husband, Mûrabêth's primary loyalty is to her father's house. Through her greatly enlarged status, the Queen strives to further the prestige and well-being of her family regardless of any and all obstacles. She never hesitates to use her influence to destroy an individual who poses a threat to Telemnar or any of her relatives.

Mûrabêth is raven-haired and dark-eyed like Telemnar her father, sharing in the ancient lineage of the Faithful of Pelargir. She conceals her potentially amoral familism beneath a cloak of sophistication and etiquette, which she enjoys displaying in conversation and social intercourse. To those who do not know her, the queen appears as a paragon of virtue.

Prince Castaher (1409-1450†)

As firstborn son and heir to his father, Castaher holds the title of Prince and the ranks of Lord-captain and Squire of Pelargir. At the age of twenty, the Prince was betrothed and wed to the Lady Lóthriel of Belfalas, one of the daughters of the aging Prince Adrazôr. Castaher and Lóthriel do not yet have any children of their own, as it is customary for the Dúnedain to bear sons and daughters late in life.

As befits a son of the Captain of Ships, Castaher is a mariner of considerable skill and a commander of men, though he has not yet been able to rise to his father's greatness. The Prince's sharp wits distinguish him as a competent ruler, though he holds the duties of Squire in disdain and longs for the freedom of the sea.

The unusually early marriage of Castamir's son was a consequence of political necessity, and was arranged at Adrazôr's urging in the hopes of protecting Belfalas against the Ursurper's ambitions. This fact has not made for a happy marriage, and continuing tensions between Lebennin and Dor-en-Ernil have placed a heavy burden upon the young couple. The Usurper needs his son's marriage in order to legitimize his seizure of the crown, by rejoining the line of Calimehtar to the second most important lineage in Gondor.

The union also left the young bride a potential hostage for surety of her family's loyalty to Pelargir. Castaher loves his wife, and is grieved by the poor treatment she receives from those of his own household. This has alienated the Prince from many of his relatives and has caused not a little resentment towards his father. Castaher has sworn to Lóthriel that there will one day be peace between their two houses, but secretly he fears that the King has other intentions as regards Belfalas. The Prince is obedient to his father and will not disregard his commands, but in the end this may destroy his marriage.

Castaher bears a striking likeness to his father, both in appearance and demeanor. He wears a mithril circlet as a sign of his title and honors, despite his lesser administrative role.

PRINCESS LÓTHRIEL (1406-1659)

One of the five children of Prince Adrazôr of Belfalas, Lóthriel was wed to the future King's son at the age of twenty-three. Lóthriel loves her husband, but peace between them has utterly failed to bring peace between their families. Instead of security, her marriage to the King's son has left her house all the more vulnerable to Castamir's depredations, and she herself little more than a palace hostage—to be manipulated as a pawn in the Usurper's efforts to coerce her family's submission to Pelargir.

Lóthriel is no mere chattel, but because of her powerlessness she is forced to rely on her wits as a means of delaying the King's designs upon Belfalas. In Pelargir she plays the innocent Princess, trading on the pretense of being oblivious to the power struggle going on around her. In this way she has protected herself from suspicion, but not from the envy and spite inevitably shown towards an outsider to the court. Her husband's shared experience of marginality within court circles has become a basis for mutual understanding and trust between them, but the Princess realizes that both she and Castaher hold deep, unshakeable loyalties for their respective families. Recognition of this fact is a source of ongoing and, perhaps, irreconcilable tension between them.

Lóthriel's long, flowing, golden hair sets her apart from her kinsfolk of Belfalas. She is slender and fair, though slighter in build than her twin sister Mórdulin. There is a light about her, which many attribute to time spent among the Eldar of Edhellond as a child. Her voice is like music to mortal ears.

CASTARION (1413-1634†)

As the younger son of his father, Castarion is not destined to the title of Prince unless his brother should die before him. His father has granted him the rank of Warden of the Haven, an office which will give him great importance when Pelargir officially becomes the royal seat. Castarion is betrothed but not yet wed to a lady of House Lintoron, a powerful Lebennin family.

Castarion shares his father's appearance, but is less imposing than his brother and shows nothing of Castamir's rigidity in his bearing. A certain gauntness causes his facial features to be more defined than those of Castaher.

LORD MORLAEN (1225-1478)

Morlaen is the elder of Castamir's two paternal uncles. As the oldest living member of the line of Calimehtar (and a key architect of its rise to power), Morlaen is in many ways more highly respected than the King. Although content to enjoy the lordship of the newly-constituted province of Lamedon, he is nevertheless often called upon to exercise his influence as patriarch of the royal house to mediate disputes among family and clients. For this reason, he is a frequent visitor in Pelargir, Umbar, and (during the summer) Minas Anor.

The tradition established by Calimehtar was that the eldest son and heir to the house should rule in Umbar until the time had come to assume his father's prerogatives over Pelargir. When his elder brother Calimir succeeded Calimehtar his father, Morlaen occupied Calimir's position as Lord-captain over Umbar until Castamir was old enough to fulfill that office. It was Morlaen who built the power network which enabled the future Usurper to win the hearts of the captains in Umbar and to forge the Southron confederacy; it was he who arranged Castamir's marriage to Telemnar's daughter.

The Usurper does not forget the many debts he owes to his uncle, and values his counsel higher than any other save his wife's. This fact displeases Morlaen. Since his nephew became King, he has marked how Mûrabêth's loyalties to her own family have often been set above the line of Calimehtar. Many captains of the fleets harbor similar misgivings about the Queen, but will not dare criticize her in the hearing of Castamir. In this way, Morlaen has become a rallying point for many factions who see in Mûrabêth a potential future rival for power in the realm.

Morlaen has retained his tall and imposing bearing in his age. The hidden power that he commands accompanies him wherever he goes as an almost tangible presence, though he rarely invokes his political influence openly. Everyone knows who he is and treats him with appropriate veneration. He always maintains an even gaze when in conversation and will never turn his eyes away from the person with whom he is speaking. Few would dare to deceive him with words, for in his presence one feels as though his piercing eyes are reading one's heart.

Caramir (1350-1565)

Caramir is the older of Morlaen's two sons. A very careful man who strives to keep a tight rein on his subordinates, the Usurper appointed Caramir to be chief of the Côr Aran in order to ensure the loyalty of this most crucial organization (see Section 2.2.7). Caramir is stern and haughty in the execution of his office, deeming none to be above suspicion and never giving the benefit of the doubt.

At times, the King himself is not privy to every aspect of his operations, so as to maintain absolute security. Caramir intentionally cultivates a well-earned reputation for cruelty, and seeks to present himself as being less subtle than he actually is, in order to lull potential schemers into the illusion of dealing with a mere cantankerous brute. Such tactics permit Caramir to quietly survey his opponents' moves without drawing undue attention upon himself.

Caramir shares his father's impassive presence, but appears in the full vigor of youth. He is tall and gaunt with severe features that match the demeanor of his office.

Lord Calimon (1410-1634)

Calimon is the younger son of Lord Morlaen and "Steward" for the King in the ruined capital of Osgiliath. Most in the Usurper's court view Calimon as an impetuous youth with little talent for anything except making enemies. This is largely the case, but it is also the reason why Castamir chose such an inept man to act as the Steward of Osgiliath. Calimon is a child who has been given very dangerous toys to play with.

Morlaen charged his nephew Castamir with the safekeeping of his wayward son a few years before the outbreak of the civil war, sending Calimon to Pelargir for proper military education and discipline. Once among his kinsfolk there, however, Calimon proved ungovernable. Calimon felt that he should be accorded the same respect shown towards Morlaen his father, and treated those who failed to do so with contempt and scorn.

Calimon welcomed the coming of war, in the hopes that it would give him opportunities to prove his mettle and prowess. Castamir gave him a chance to make himself useful by taking command of the rebels in Linhir, but Calimon lost them to the unexpected leadership of Orodreth of Morthond, thus shaming him before the captains. From that moment onward, the progress of the war faded into insignificance next to his quest for vengeance on his rival. His eventual success in this endeavor raised Castamir's estimation of Calimon. The Usurper considered him cunning enough to deal with the rabble of Osgiliath during the days after the burning of the once-proud riverside capital. (After all, at least there would be no one to complain about his young cousin's behavior.)

Calimon always dresses ceremoniously, as though his mere presence were enough to warrant a formal occasion. His sword is prominently displayed hanging from his belt, and he frequently draws it when engaging in conversation, shaking it in a threatening way at the least provocation. His movements are tense and abrupt, as if he were impatient about something (even when there is no apparent cause).

Governor Elendin (1268-1447†)

Elendin is the third and youngest son of Calimehtar, brother to Morlaen, and second uncle to the Usurper. Elendin is also respected by Calimir's generation, but he has never taken as active a role in the affairs of the family as Morlaen has. His appointment to the lordship of Harondor was Morlaen's idea, but was independently supported by the King, who recognized his military and administrative competency.

In fact, Elendin had been Castamir's mentor as a child in Pelargir. He taught the future Usurper skill in arms and political acumen, in preparation for his impending appointment to Umbar. Elendin's lessons served the young Castamir well in his rise to power, and even as King he treats Elendin as superior in honor. Elendin will always offer a friendly ear to his nephew, but will defer his counsel to the verdict of Morlaen.

Elendin is the model of a Pelargir military officer—handsome, smartly-dressed, well-mannered, and commanding. Unlike his brother, however, he maintains a more open and jovial demeanor around people than Morlaen. He likes to present himself as an old, down-to-earth soldier, and carries his sword with him at all times to prove it.

Lord Duranil (1326-1448†)

Duranil is Elendin's older son and Warden of Tolfalas. He is his father's son, and delights in the exercise of arms and military tactics. But, unlike his headstrong cousin Calimon, Duranil is of a more restrained and thoughtful disposition, preferring to decipher an opponent's mind before engaging him as an enemy. Like Elendin, Duranil is less concerned about the politics of the family than with efficient execution of his duties as warden. This makes him more palatable to some; but he chooses his friends carefully, and rarely concerns himself with foolish—or even "entertaining"—associates. Blunt, he speaks as he thinks. Many consider him abrasive, but Duranil rarely lets the opinions of others bother him.

Duranil is perhaps possessed of more peace of mind than anyone else in his family because he has no great worries as warden of a little island. After all, Tolfalas has no loyalists, no discontented rabble, and no rivals to power. It also makes life a trifle boring for Duranil, who avidly seeks out intelligent conversation and companionship. He unites his two greatest loves by carrying on philosophical debates while fencing.

Duranil is shorter and stockier than his father or brother, but maintains their proud bearing. He dresses more casually than his peers (except when attending formal functions), and is uniformly unkempt. His dark, oiled hair is always pulled back into a pony-tail.

Governor Alandur (1343-1447†)

Alandur is the younger son of Elendin and Governor of Calenardhon. He joined the young Castamir in Umbar in 1370, accompanying him on three expeditionary voyages to the coasts of Far Harad. He returned to Pelargir when Castamir succeeded his father. Acting as Squire of the haven until Castamir's son Castaher had come of age, he was awarded the Lord-captaincy of the Western Division of the fleet in Linhir.

Alandur played a significant role in the Linhir uprisings before the death of Valacar, but was recalled to Pelargir when civil war had been declared by the traditionalist confederacy. He fought valiantly for the Captain of Ships during the Kin-strife, leading (with Orodreth) the final assault that broke the gates of western Osgiliath. In return for this and other demonstrations of loyalty over the years, Castamir gave Alandur the governorship of Calenardhon.

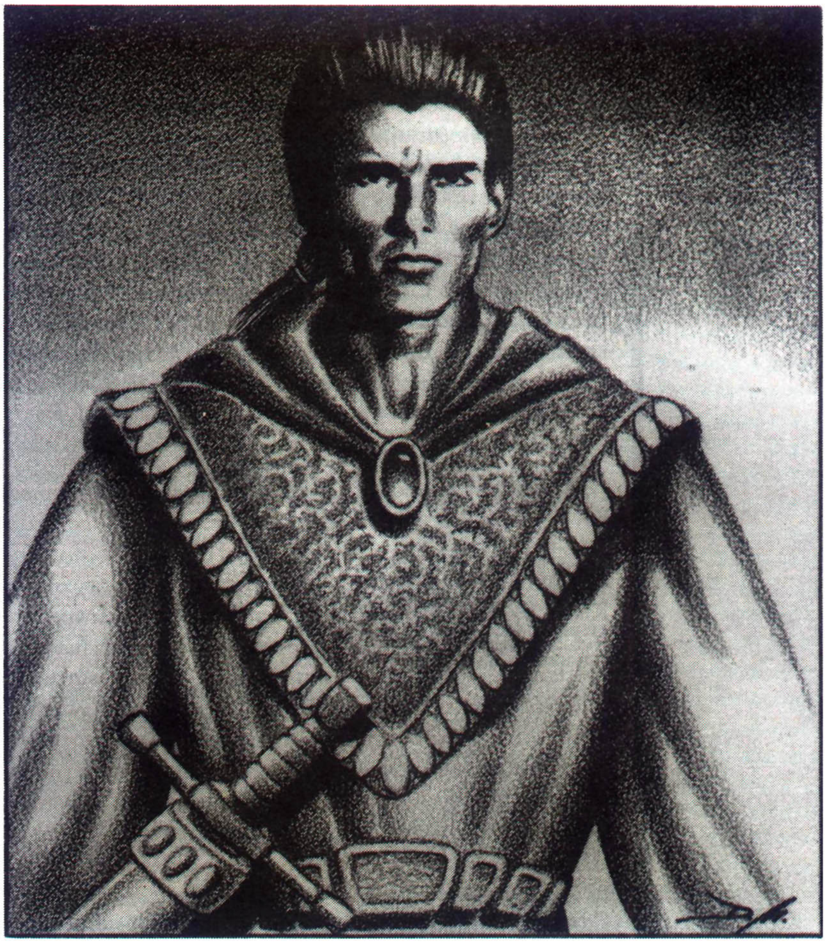
Alandur is singled out by his blond hair, although in all other respects he resembles the Dúnadan ideal. He seeks to emphasize his noble heritage by governing his appearance and movements by the most exact protocols, yet he presents a much more relaxed figure than his cousins (despite—or, rather, because of—the need to cloak his sensitive political position in Calenardhon). Unlike his brother, Alandur's tactful and polite bearing rarely discloses his true disposition.

2.2.2 THE REALM OF GONDOR

During the reign of Castamir, the extent of the South-kingdom is identical to that which it achieved at the height of its power under Ciryaher Hyarmendacil in the year 1050, with the exception that, since 1250, Rhovanion has been recognized as an independent realm. The five geopolitical regions into which the realm of Gondor may be divided are here defined according to their distinctive economic or strategic importance to the Kin-strife.

The Anduin Vales

The inhabitants of Gondor are most numerous in that portion of the Anduin Vale comprising the regions of Ithilien, Anórien, and Lebennin. This stretch of the river contains the four principal cities of the realm: Minas Ithil, Minas Anor, Osgiliath, and Pelargir. Without the revenues accruing from the control of this heartland, Castamir's rule would quickly disintegrate.



Lord Calimon

The Western Coastlands

The seaward regions west of Ethir Anduin comprise the hinterland of ancient Gondor: Lamedon, Morthond, Belfalas, and Anfalas. The province of Lamedon contains some two ward thousand inhabitants, while Anfalas remains a sparsely-inhabited frontier territory. Together with Anfalas, the princely fiefs of Belfalas and Morthond support a population of two million. The autonomy of Dor-en-Ernil (Belfalas) and Morthond is primarily due to the presence of a large company of mounted knights, vital to the defense of the realm and coveted by the Usurper. The Prince of Belfalas is responsible for equipping and mustering this company in time of war.

The Southern Coastlands

Historically and geographically, the province of Harondor has been a part of the Harad. It differs from its neighboring regions in its possession of two fertile river valleys which, when added to the coasts, embrace a population of half a million. The coasts south of the River Harnen belong to the territory of Umbar and boast a population of seven ward thousand—the legacy of four millennia of intensive agriculture. The haven of Umbar functions primarily as a military stronghold and tributary center for Pelargir, as well as securing Gondor's claim to the coastlands against the peoples of the interior.

CALENARDHON

The northern territory of Calenardhon is of concern to Castamir, for it is a potential seedbed of unrest. Hoping to arrest his concerns, the Usurper embarked on a strategy of forcible relocation of suspect individuals and groups to the one-time capital of Osgiliath. There, the King can watch them until they perish amidst the tragic squalor of the city's ruins. Their former lands are then resettled by more trustworthy people from the coasts or by military officers loyal to Castamir. Thus, the territory's character fluctuates greatly. Control of the Gap of Calenardhon by the strongholds of Angrenost and Aglarond is the most pressing reason for the Usurper to retain military control over this region.

ENEDHWAITH

The lands beyond the Gap of Calenardhon are claimed by Gondor, but are only nominally under its control. Much of this region is sparsely settled by Daen-folk, many of whom do not in practice recognize the authority of the Kings. While there are many Daen scouts and skirmishers in Castamir's army, their kinsmen in Enedhwaith have no particular disposition towards Eldacar or the Usurper.

Gondor claims much of the land south of the Gwathló as the territory of Enedhwaith, but the Daen pay little heed to this, since the King's authority has not extended into their hilly homeland for a very long time. (The border between Enedhwaith and Dunfearan has never been properly delineated.) Many have not even heard of the Kin-strife, and those that have care little about its outcome. Castamir's army has successfully recruited Daen mercenaries to fight in Ithilien, but only by paying good silver.

Castamir has little interest in the fortunes of Enedhwaith, since it is a poor and sparsely settled region, though he desires to maintain control over the road to Tharbad. He has relocated most of the garrisons of the territory to Calenardhon. The recently appointed governor of Enedhwaith, Ecthelion, resides in the fortified town of Lond Angren at the mouth of the Angren. He and his small garrison have no ability to influence events in distant Dunfearan.

2.2.3 CASTAMIR'S RULE (1437-1447)

During his years as Captain of Ships, Castamir built up a heterogeneous confederation of groups with little in common save a hatred for Eldacar—from ambitious merchants in Pelargir to secret chauvinist-reactionary orders of commoners. The Usurper has cunningly exploited these differences in order to identify the line of Calimehtar with the salvation of Gondor. Nonetheless, these groups continue to distrust each other—the chauvinists accusing open-minded merchants of being ready to sell any ideal for a profit, the merchants accusing the chauvinists of ideological rigidity in refusing to make sensible compromises. The King's insensitive policies sometimes make matters worse, and he himself is rarely prepared to make the necessary compromises to satisfy his key allies.

At the time of the Usurper's reign, Gondor contains several distinct forms of land tenure and administration (see Section 10.2.1). The realm is comprised of:

(1) three **Royal Demesnes or Wards:** Anórien, Ithilien and Tolfalas, which are traditionally ruled by stewards drawn from the King's own family or from some other household of venerable lineage;

(2) three **Provinces:** Lebennin, Harondor and Lamedon, administered by an appointed Hîr (S. "Lord"), who retains his title for the duration of his tenure (which is usually life-long);

(3) four **Military Territories:** Calenardhon, Enedhwaith, Anfalas and Umbar, controlled by a Dorgon (S. "Governor"), whose tenure of office is typically much briefer than that of a provincial lord; and

(4) two genuine **Fiefs:** Belfalas (Dor-en-Ernil) and Morthond, ruled by hereditary Princes.

A Gondorian nobleman need not be a warrior; he may as easily earn his honors through administrative prowess or academic excellence. He receives social esteem in proportion to his competence and dedication to the realm and its traditional ideals. His status also partially depends on his lineage, and having an ancestor that came to Middle-earth with Elendil certainly opens many doors.

GONDOR'S POLITICAL ORGANIZATION DURING THE USURPER'S REIGN

Region	Jurisdiction	Political Center	Administrative Officer
Osgiliath	Royal Seat*	Osgiliath	Calimon (Steward)
Anórien	Royal Demesne	Minas Anor	Ciryang (Prince-president)**
Ithilien	Royal Demesne	Minas Ithil	Heruvorn (Steward)
Tolfalas	Royal Demesne	Caras Tolfalas	Duranil (Warden)
Lebennin	Province	Pelargir	Castamir (King)
Harondor	Province	Caras Mirilond	Elendin (Lord)
Lamedon	Province	Calembel	Morlaen (Lord)
Calenardhon	Territory	Calmírië	Alandur (Governor)
Enedhwaith	Territory	Lond Angren	Ecthelion (Governor)
Anfalas	Territory	Lond Galen	Caranthir (Governor)
Umbar	Territory	Umbar	Telemnar (Governor)
Morthond	Fief	Sarn Erech	Maeglin (Prince)
Belfalas	Fief	Lond Ernil	Adrazôr (Prince)

* While Osgiliath remains the official royal seat of the realm, Pelargir now fulfills this role in practice.

** This form of stewardship reflects the unique political structure of Minas Anor (see Section 7.3).

2.2.4 GONDORIAN LAW

The laws of Gondor should reflect the Will of the Valar—since the Valar are considered to be eternal, good, and infallible, their will cannot change. Accordingly, new law is only required when judges discover that existing law does not address a certain problem, or when it is thought that a judge or law-maker has erred and another solution of a legal problem is closer to the Will of the Valar.

Much is done unobtrusively in local courts, when a judge interprets a legal text in a code or an earlier case. If the judge discovers that there is no local law governing a case, he creates new law by using similar cases from the past or from other courts, or by an interpretation of the code, where codified law is used. A judge can also change a law, but this is done rarely and very grudgingly. In most cases, this is done by the judge, when he finds facts which make the present case different from the precedence. Then, a new interpretation is validated.

New laws can also be enacted by the King, but these must always be discussed and confirmed by the Crown Council (see Section 7.3.4). Such laws are always codified and under the jurisdiction of the King's Courts. Since the King also is the supreme judge of the realm, he can make new laws in that role. However, his position is not different from a local judge and his methods of changing laws are similar. In reality, most verdicts are given by the King after a discussion in the Crown Council.

Rural Law

Gondorian law in rural areas is based on local traditions which, with the exception of Anórien, are common law systems (see Section 10.1.1). In 1227, an unofficial commission was formed among the majority of judges in Anórien. To simplify their work, they began writing down their legal rulings in short sentences. Within a decade, a law book was available. By the time of the Usurper's reign, the tome serves as the official code of the demesne. While no other provinces have followed the example of the Anórian code, the code is nevertheless used unofficially in parts of Ithilien and Lebennin, modified to suit local traditions.

Each ward has a local court. Its composition varies from place to place, but generally there is one judge supported by a number of jurors or lay judges. The judges are appointed by the King, Prince, Lord, or Governor of the region. There can be some popular influence on an appointment, since the King has to chose one of three to five persons proposed in a popular election. In some cases, it is a local council or the elders which make the proposals to the King. A judge is appointed for a limited period—usually five to nine years or for life, depending on local tradition. A local court can give a verdict in almost any matter brought before it.

In Anórien, Ithilien, Lebennin and Dor-en-Ernil, a jury participates in the verdict. They are usually appointed by lot for each separate case among the freeholder farmers in the ward. There are usually between twelve and sixteen jurors. In outlying areas like Anfalas, Calenardhon and Harondor is it more common with lay judges, elected by the peasants of a ward for a period of one to three years. There are usually twelve or fourteen lay judges in a ward.

The area north of Ered Nimrais and west of Hithaeglir is less subject to royal influence, and most of its inhabitants are organized into clans. Here, the judge is a local chieftain or nobleman, who is assisted by the elders or by a number of lay judges elected by the clan. This system also exists in Dor Rhúnen and some parts of southeastern Harondor.

In parts of Anfalas, Dor-en-Ernil, Lebennin, Harondor, and southern Ithilien (Harithilien), there are manor courts presided over by local noblemen, who are supported by six to ten lay judges elected by the peasants. A manor court usually only deals with questions of real estate, but in Anfalas and Harondor it can also give verdicts in minor crime and civil suits. The exact power of a manor court depends on the privileges of the presiding nobleman.

A discontented party can appeal from the local court verdict to a provincial or territorial Royal Court of Appeal. This court has five judges appointed by the King for a period of twelve years. In areas with small or negligible royal influence—such as Enedhwaith, Dor Rhúnen, and inner Harondor—it is not possible to appeal from the tribal court. Dor-en-Ernil's Court of Appeal is appointed by the Prince. As a final solution, a party in legal proceedings can always appeal to the King. This is usually done by asking for the King's grace.

Urban Law

Nearly all urban settlements in Gondor possess a codified law, a tradition begun in Pelargir in the late Second Age. Since then, its code has been promulgated by most other towns or used as prototype for local codes. Pelargir's judges are renowned for their wise verdicts in matters of trade and merchant law; these are used elsewhere as guide-lines for the interpretation of local laws.

In Pelargir—as elsewhere—such courts have one chief judge and four ordinary judges. The chief judge is either elected by the burghers (i.e., those citizens who actually participate in city government) or appointed by the King, depending on what privileges the monarch has granted the town. The other judges are always elected, either directly by the burghers or indirectly by a council of electors, by the town council or by the guilds. The exact method depends on local traditions and privileges. Both appointments and elections can be for a limited period or for life. It is possible to appeal the verdict of a town court to the Royal Court of Appeal.

A special market court is formed on market days in Pelargir and in a few other cities. It is made up of one of the ordinary judges and two lay judges. The market court is only allowed to pass judgments in minor matters of merchant law or criminal law, and it is supposed to quickly hand down these verdicts. If it cannot be done before the end of the market day, the case is moved to the ordinary town court. A verdict of the market court can be appealed to the ordinary town court.

Most towns have also a King's Court. It has jurisdiction over the town and the surrounding rural area for certain matters, like all cases involving "the King's person." This means cases concerning governmental affairs like taxes, but also some crimes such as high treason. Furthermore, if one of the parties in any case is a King's officer, he has always the right to have the case tried in the King's Court. Appeal from a verdict of a King's Court is made to the Royal Court of Appeal in Osgiliath. A King's Court has three judges appointed by the King for a period of seven years. There are no King's Courts in Enedhwaith, Dor Rhúnen, and inner Harondor.

Castamir's Reforms

One of Castamir's first moves was to dismiss all judges who had been appointed by Eldacar or who had supported him. The term "support" was interpreted in a very wide sense and eventually included all judges who had given a verdict in the name of Eldacar. The overt reason was that they had acted treasonably by supporting Eldacar instead of the rightful King.

Castamir's next step was to change the rules of tenure to "during the King's good pleasure." Practically speaking, he assumed the right to remove a judge at his leisure. As noted, judges had always been appointed for a certain term or for life, but a judge could always be removed if he acted criminally. By creating a still vaguer standard, Castamir abused the customary privilege of his office, but clothed his motives under a veil of legality.

A courier arrives

Recently, Castamir has also announced a two-part reform program for Gondor's legal system. In the first part, Castamir declared his intention to form a new court for matters concerning "the King's person." Whenever the King finds it necessary due to the safety of the realm or to the upholding of Dúnadan traditions, he may remove a case to this court. Its deliberations may be held in a secret conclave.

The second part is the forming of a number of Circuit Courts of Inquiry. They will have three judges with the right to visit all local courts to revise all their verdicts. If a verdict is found to be "improper to the customs and traditions of the Dúnedain," the Circuit Court of Inquiry has the right to change it without further hearing of the parties.

2.2.5 COMMUNICATION

A system of excellent roads enables the swift movement of armed forces and provides the basis for easy communication among the chief cities of the realm, making for an effective administrative apparatus. This situation is complemented and reinforced by the string of safe harbors and fortified havens which line the Bay of Belfalas from Andrast to the peninsula of Umbar. The course of the River Anduin unites these lands into a vast network of which Pelargir is the center.

The King's Post transports mail by mounted couriers. Courier stations about every thirty miles along the major roads facilitate this. A courier rides from one station to the next, where his mailbag is transferred to another courier with a fresh horse. In this way, a message may travel anywhere from a ward to a ward and fifty miles in a day if the weather is favorable, but the price of six silver pieces per mile limits the use of the Post to the few who are able to afford such exorbitant rates. All mail sent in this fashion is monitored by the Côr Aran, who freely read all letters they consider interesting (see Section 2.2.7).

The King's administration also has a pigeon carrier service for use by high-ranking officials. Many lords and governors keep pigeons at their residences. Reception stations are located at Minas Anor, Pelargir, Lond Ernil, and Aglarond. To become an efficient messenger, a carrier pigeon must get familiar with the terrain surrounding its coop, a process which takes three years. A well-trained pigeon can return to the coop from a distance of up to four hundred miles when flying over familiar territory, and up to sixty miles over unfamiliar terrain (having an average speed of thirty miles per hour). If released further away from the coop, the pigeon will most likely get lost. Carrier pigeons are expensive to train and maintain. For that reason, they are considered to be valuable royal property. Intentionally killing a pigeon may be punished with heavy fines.

Traffic on the Sea and along the Anduin provides the swiftest, most inexpensive and comfortable mode of transportation for people and goods. Five of Gondor's major cities possess havens while the sixth, Minas Ithil, is situated near enough to both Osgiliath and Minas Anor to take advantage of the Great River. While land routes do exist along the coast of Harad, the great majority of intercourse between Umbar and Gondor is carried out by ship. Under a favorable wind, the typical ship of Gondor will travel between a hundred and fifty and a hundred and sixty-five miles in a day.

THE PALANTÍRI

With the burning of Osgiliath in 1437, Castamir achieved one of his principal desires: a pretext for removing the royal seat to Pelargir. Still, the Usurper paid dearly; with the slaughter that followed Eldacar's abandonment of the city came the destruction of the Tower of the Dome, where the heirs of Anárion had kept the Palantír—the Master-stone of the South-kingdom. With its loss, the Kings of Gondor no longer possess the power to communicate directly with Arthedain in the north.

The Seven Stones of Elendil are therefore now only six in number. King Araphor of Arthedain holds the two Stones formerly of Annúminas and Amon Sûl in the protection of his capital at Fornost, while the Eldar of Lindon guard the Stone of Emyn Beraid. In Gondor, the remaining, lesser Stones reside at Minas Anor, Minas Ithil, and Orthanc.

The three remaining Palantíri of Gondor have an effective radius of vision of roughly five hundred miles, which enables the Orthanc-stone to communicate with the Anor-stone but not with the Ithil-stone. The Anor-stone is in accord with both. Knowledge of the Stones is a closely guarded secret of the heirs of Anárion, and their existence is practically unknown to the vast majority of the realm except through the filter of popular legend (if this were not the case, the Tower of the Dome would never have been destroyed).

The use of the Palantíri is an inalienable grace given to Elendil and his recognized heirs, but the authority to make use of one of the Stones may also be conferred upon others at the King's word. Because of its covenant with the Lady of the Waters (see Section 5.4.1), the line of Edhelion has traditionally brought forth descendants possessed of the true sight of Westernesse. The sons of Elendil, recognizing this gift, entrusted their house with the lore of the Stones and the transmission of the art of their usage to those whom the Kings saw fit to delegate the power.

This fact has presented a difficulty for Castamir's ambitions. The line of Calimehtar, while it has knowledge of the Stones and of their use, does not possess the requisite skills to use them effectively for its own purposes. The reason for this is that the knowledge and use of the Stones has been the exclusive prerogative of the King and his direct heirs. Castamir's family has been cut off from this tradition for three generations.

This situation is problematic because of the tensions which now exist between the Usurper and the Prince's house in Belfalas (see Section 2.1.1). Were Castamir to display open hostility towards Adrazôr or any of his family, the relatives of the Prince who act as wardens of the Stones might refuse the King vital information which only the Stones can give. On the other hand, the loyalty of the Wardens to the Usurper's rule has always been in doubt; hence, there is the constant danger that they might make use of the Stones to deceive or misinform the King or, worse still, use the Palantíri in the cause of his enemies. Because of this peril, Castamir has commanded the Côr Aran to keep close watch on all who use the Stones.

The three lesser Stones of Gondor are in the charge of the Prince's brother Edrahil and his two sons. Before the burning of Osgiliath, the Kings themselves had assumed the role of warden for the Master-stone, while the line of Edhelion kept the Anor-stone; but Castamir commanded Edrahil to survey the Orthanc-stone, thus isolating him as much as possible from both the center of power and from those Stones closest to Rhovanion. The Usurper has left Edrahil's less dangerous sons—Lórin and Tirion—in charge of the Anor and Ithil-stones. All three have been commanded to instruct the new officers of the King concerning Palantíri lore, and are expected to assist these men in achieving whatever task the Usurper sets for them.

The Palantíri of Gondor have two principal uses. They allow the surveyor to view, as through a telescope, any area within the range of their power. The act of viewing lacks an audible dimension and cannot give access to the thoughts of those viewed by it. A surveyor of great will and ability may be able to focus in on a certain object or aspect within its range, but in every case the location to be viewed must be illuminated (e.g., by the sun) in order to be visible at all. The Stone is able to "see through" obstacles which block its line of sight (e.g., mountains, walls, etc.) but it cannot penetrate darkness. This viewing power may also be extended to embrace scenes or events which took place at other times, but these must be within its spatial limits.

Stones which are in accord with one another (as the Anor-stone is with the others) may also be used to transfer thought from one user to the other. By this means, news, advice, and counsel may be exchanged between opposite ends of the realm. It is this ability which makes the Palantíri so valuable to the Kings—and to Castamir in particular—for the Stones make it difficult to withhold information from the Usurper. Any warning of rebellion can be swiftly brought to the ear of Pelargir. This communicative ability, however, has been significantly limited by

the loss of the Master-stone. When thoughts are being transferred between two lesser Stones, it is impossible for a third Stone—with the exception of the Master-stone—to establish contact or to otherwise "eavesdrop" on the conversation. As a consequence of this, the King is not able to monitor how the other Stones are being used or who is using them. This makes the potential danger of their being used against the Usurper all the greater.

2.2.6 THE HOSTS OF GONDOR

War has been an ever-present reality for the Dúnedain in Middle-earth; and though Gondor has increased in might and splendor for more than a thousand years of the age, defense through force of arms remains the most important factor orienting life. The hosts of Gondor are equipped, maintained, and commanded by the heirs of Anárion. With the creation of the office of Captain of Ships in 1240 (see Section 2.1.1), the naval might of the realm began to acquire an organization independent of the Kings, which ultimately enabled Castamir's bid for the crown.

THE NAVY

The coastal area of Gondor grew with the power of its navy from a small, Ethir-based defense force to an ocean-going armada under the Ship-kings, during which time it reigned supreme over all the coasts between the River Gwathló and the cape of Umbar without competition south of Andrast. Gondor's navy reached the peak of its power by the end of Hyarmendacil's reign, but the lack of competitors left subsequent Kings without motive to invest more than the absolute minimum money for its upkeep.

This attitude changed somewhat towards the end of the 13th century. With the creation of the "Captain of Ships"—and (later) in Calimir—the navy found a commander outspoken in its cause. Castamir worked even harder to strengthen the Royal Fleet when he succeeded his father in 1384. Both opposed the policies of the King by advocating an extension of Gondor's influence southwards, hoping for the submission of the Raj and a campaign against the growing threat of the Storm King.

Although their efforts did not succeed in increasing the funds assigned to the fleet, Calimir and Castamir did manage to remove much of the bureaucracy responsible for the inefficient use of existing funds. By instilling a new morale and pride among the sailors, they began to haul the navy out of its lethargy and re-established much of its old splendor of the Ship-kings, though the fleet is smaller now than in those days.

Their naval staff implemented a program to extend the annual period of active service to ships which had not left port for decades, and several old hulks which had only been kept on the lists for appearance's sake were replaced with new ships. All of this guaranteed unhesitating naval support when Castamir raised his flag against Eldacar. Naval funding and ship-building programs have greatly expanded with Castamir's ascension.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE ROYAL FLEET

Few oared ships (i.e., galleys, dromons, and progs designed for fighting close to shore) have been built since the reign of Falastur, whose conquests beyond the Ethir rendered them inferior to sailing vessels. A few are still used to patrol Ethir Anduin and Nen Umbar, but several smaller oared boats have been built during recent years for use on the Anduin.

Ships built during the 14th and 15th centuries reflect the main purpose of the current Royal Fleet—to patrol and combat piracy on Belfalas Bay. Most of these are small and fast with a high endurance, designed to carry a small detachment of marines. Sailing ships built for longer endurance and a greater complement of marines were constructed during the time of the Ship-kings, and were kept on the list as long as possible (even when badly maintained and unusable), but few new ones were built before Calimir became Captain of Ships. The shipbuilding program of Calimir and Castamir scrapped the old hulks and replaced them with new ships of similar types. Most ships participate in large, annual training maneuvers and are ordered to patrol at sea at other times.

Gondor's fleets are manned by a standing naval force, which is reinforced in times of war by army troops, merchant crews, and the civilian population of the coasts. The naval establishment is supplemented by a force of marines, who serve on ships and garrison coastal fortifications. The regular peacetime recruits enlist for periods of seven or fourteen years. Depending on rank, a seaman may retire after twenty-one or twenty-eight years and then receive a plot of land. Merchant and civilian elements only serve for short periods (and never longer than the war). A small number were drafted during the Kin-strife, but saw little action since the majority of the conflict took place on land.

NAVAL ORGANIZATION

Castamir's navy is organized into four divisions:

(1) the Main Fleet, based in Pelargir and comprising three wings,

(2) the Southern Division, based in Umbar and comprising two wings,

(3) the Western Division, based in Linhir, and

(4) the River Fleet, based on the Anduin north of Rauros.

Each division or wing is divided into squadrons led by commanders, who are in turn subordinated to a Lord-captain. Each squadron is made up of individual ship captains. Although by tradition he should have appointed his eldest son to succeed him in the office, Castamir's continued preoccupation with naval affairs has led him to retain the title "Captain of Ships," making himself the commander of the Royal Fleet.

The Main Fleet forms the largest of the four divisions and contains the majority of the large ships, which are intended for battle and troop transport. A number of smaller ships, which guard and patrol the coasts of Nen

Belfalas, are also included in the Main Fleet. Whereas the other divisions are only intended for routine tasks in peacetime or as local defense, the Main Fleet is designed to bear the brunt of the fighting should Gondor become involved in a major war at sea.

The Southern Division is the second largest of the Royal Fleet, and is responsible for protecting the waters and coasts south of Harondor. Although they do not pose a major threat to trade, an important task of the Southern Division is fighting the pirates that infest the waters south of Umbar. A large number of small and medium-sized patrol ships form the core of this division; but there are also some larger ships, which patrol the Harad coast and attack its pirate nests.

The Western Division is the smallest of the four, protecting the coast of Anfalas and the trade-route to Eriador. There is occasional piracy between the Angren and Baranduin, but in general it is a peaceful area. The Western Division possesses only small patrol craft.

Gondor has always kept a small force of river boats on the Anduin north of Rauros to control the main artery through the realm. This fourth division of the navy, the River Fleet, was enlarged by Minalcar after his victory over the Easterlings in 1248. The army command wanted to take control of it because of its importance for defending Calenardhon, but the navy resisted the claim. Both Minalcar and Valacar refrained from making any clear decision on this matter, and the River Fleet was left with the navy very much by default. (The question was finally decided in favor of the navy by Castamir directly following his ascension.)

A portion of the River Fleet that had supported Eldacar during the Kin-strife withdrew up-river and established a temporary base somewhere near the Gladden Fields, reordering themselves as "the Anduin Squadron." Occasional naval clashes on the Anduin north of Rauros have led Eldacar to strengthen the squadron by reducing the size of another loyalist squadron, which Minalcar had established on the Sea of Rhûn. As this squadron was primarily composed of Northmen, it sided with Eldacar during the war.

THE ARMY

The core of Gondor's army is recruited from the lower Anduin vale and consists of a line infantry, which is equipped and thoroughly trained to deal with the less sophisticated hosts of the potential foes that encompass the border marches and frontiers of the South-kingdom. Auxiliaries, such as missile and reconnaissance troops, are usually drawn from these outlying regions. A contingent of heavy cavalry led by knights from Belfalas provides a shock force for the foot soldiers, complemented by a lighter Northman cavalry.

Not surprisingly, this traditional arrangement was altered during the Kin-strife, wherein all of the Northmen fought on the side of Eldacar. The rebels were further deprived of mounted troops by the non-involvement of the knights of Edhelion in the war, forcing them to enlist the support of the kings of Harad as well as Daen Lintis auxiliaries from Dunfearan in Enedhwaith.

The presence of alien mercenaries in Gondor has proven very controversial. The Southron cavalry has acquired an especially bad reputation for arrogance, while the Daen, primarily assigned to fight loyalist guerrillas, have quickly become infamous for their cruelty and are hated by the inhabitants of areas where they operate. Such clashes between civilians and these military groups have been an inevitable damper on Castamir's popularity, and tavern brawls between youths and soldiers are all too common fixtures of city life under the Usurper. The morale of his own troops, on the other hand, has been reduced by the King's purge of certain officers, whose replacements have obviously been chosen for their loyalty to the Usurper rather than their military competence.

THE WATCH ON MORDOR

With the passing of the realm of Sauron, the men of Gondor built strong towers to guard the passes of Mordor against the return of Evil. The twin forts of Carchost and Narchost kept watch over the Morannon, while the fences of the Morgai became a border march under the towers of Durthang and Cirith Dúath. The Watch on Mordor was not abandoned until the days of King Telemnar (1634-1636), when the realm was decimated by the Great Plague. The decline of Gondor's vigilance, however,. had already begun long before the Kin-strife, during which time its numbers were further reduced for military action in the siege of Osgiliath.

Castamir's new garrisons are drawn exclusively from Dúnadan levies (as others would scarcely appreciate the significance of keeping guard over this apparently empty land). By contrast to the towers of Durthang and Cirith Dúath, the forts of the Morannon have increased greatly in strategic importance due to the new threat posed by Rhovanion, and their companies have been enlarged with troops drawn principally from Lebennin (see Section 8.1.1).

2.2.7 THE CÔR ARAN

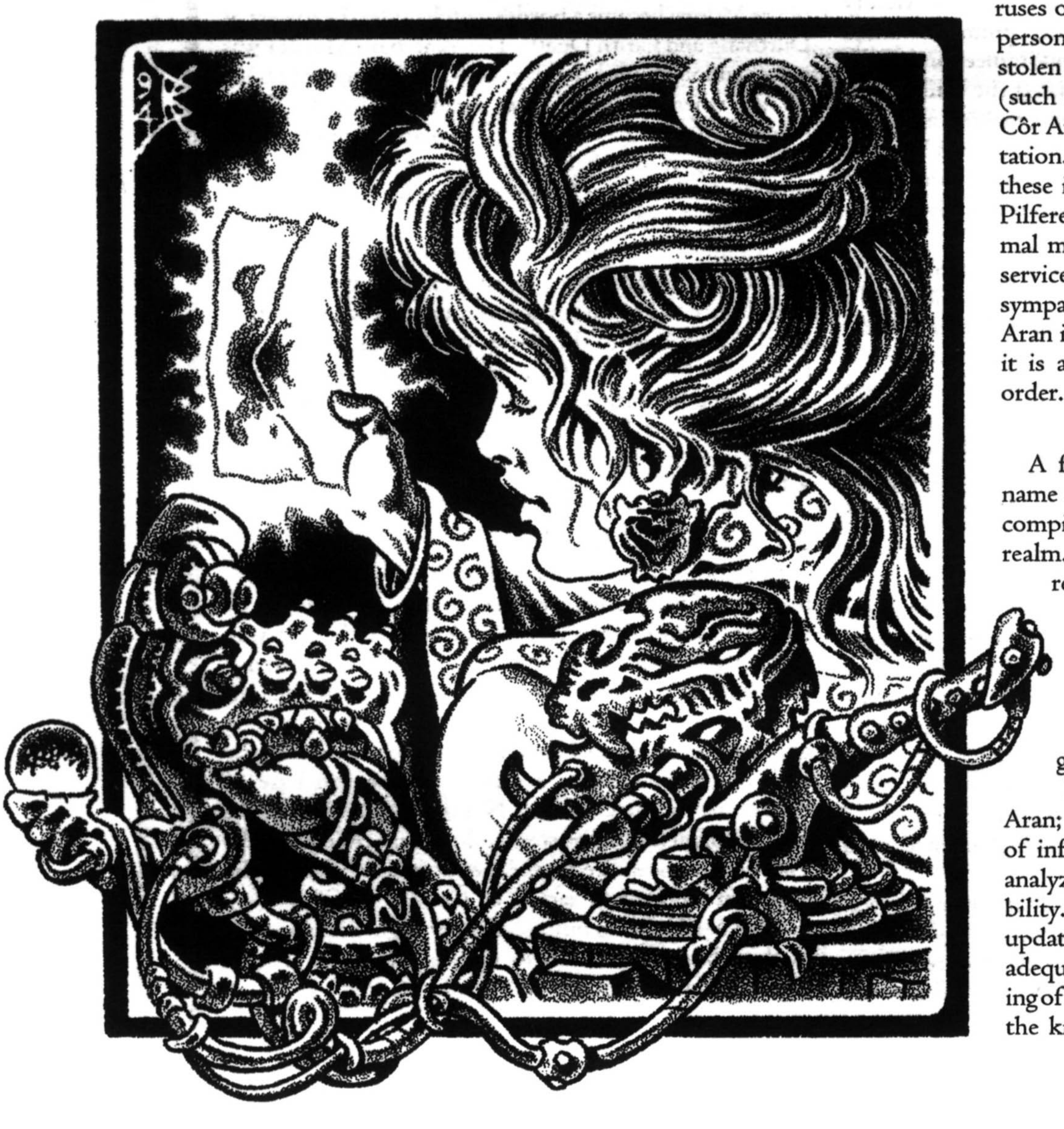
In addition to the normal methods of military enforcement, the Usurper ensures the security of his reign by means of a network of secret police known as the Côr Aran (S. "King's Circle"). This organization is led by Caramir (see Section 2.2.1), and has its headquarters in Pelargir. Soon after his seizure of the crown in 1437, the new King gave his cousin leave to commandeer the premises of the Hall of the Faithful as a central archive and base of operations for the Côr Aran. Naturally, this entailed the eviction of all the loremasters and wardens resident in the Hall—an impious deed in the eyes of those who revere the legacy of Imrazôr as sacred to Gondor's heritage (see Section 5.4.1). With biting satire the slighted now speak of this place as *"the nest of the Crebain Aran"* (the "King's Crows") and of Caramir as "the Chief Crow."

The Côr Aran is organized into a system of interconnected cells. The leader of a cell reports either directly to Pelargir or to a locally stationed officer under Caramir's personal control, who is responsible for a group of cells. Due to the relative slowness of clandestine communication in the realm, the cell leader has much freedom in performing his assigned tasks. The number of operatives placed under a cell leader, and the range of specialized skills possessed by such a team (e.g., languages, burglary, seduction) are provided in accordance with the contingencies of the cell's target, which may vary in scale from a single person or organization to an entire city.

Informants, interception of letters, forced entry, and infiltration are the four methods generally employed by the Côr Aran in their never-ending struggle to uncover potential enemies of the Usurper. While they are competent at what they do, these methods possess certain inherent limitations which work against the attainment of their objectives. As it soon became apparent that letters entrusted to the King's Post were being opened and read, subsequent written correspondence rarely expressed any overt discontent with the King or his servants. Consequently, more direct forms of infiltration became necessary, though this rendered the task of the Côr Aran much more time-consuming and difficult.

Informants are ordinary people who provide the Côr Aran with information on their employers, friends, or relatives. Some do this willingly, while others must be bribed, persuaded, coerced, or deceived into talking. Many falsely denounce ex-lovers, commercial competitors, and other enemies for strictly personal reasons. The Côr Aran must therefore deal with a substantial amount of misleading reports and red herrings. This in turn renders their activity all the more transparent to the people, generating as much discontent as it suppresses. Such informants are reviled among the populace as "the cuckoos of the King's crows."

The Côr Aran's policy encouraging the forced entry into public or private buildings for the purpose of obtaining incriminating information also provokes popular hostility. In order to insure the guilt of the accused, the perpetrators of these unannounced break-ins often plant stolen goods. Worse, many attempt to covertly obtain evidence under the guise of common thievery. The latter ruses often necessitate the actual theft of personal property. While some of the stolen goods are used in other operations (such as in the framing of suspects), the Côr Aran's agents often fall prey to temptation. Many fail to report the taking of these incidental items to their superiors. Pilfered goods become in effect an informal means of "payment" for the agents' services to the crown. Victims and their sympathizers rightly suspect that the Côr Aran is as much a part of the problem as it is a vehicle for maintaining law and order.



Côr Aran Spy

The Archive

A file exists for every subject whose name appears on taxation lists, which are compiled regularly from all corners of the realm. These files contain all official records concerning the person, in addition to any knowledge acquired by the Côr Aran in the course of its activities. The thoroughness of this project is at once the chief strength and weakness of Caramir's intelligence network.

Few escape the scrutiny of the Côr Aran; yet, in practice, the sheer magnitude of information to be written down and analyzed poses an administrative impossibility. The time and labor required to update files leaves little or no time for adequate examination of new (to say nothing of existing) information. Consequently, the knowledge presented in a given file

may contain serious errors, or even misplaced information referring to another person of similar name. This logistic nightmare has accordingly resulted in frequent scandal and embarrassment during legal proceedings which are granted use of Côr Aran files.

Inability to check the accuracy of file content has also led to deliberate manipulation of the system. Many otherwise innocent people have been framed by having false information planted (for a price) in their file—a convenient means of establishing guilt in the King's courts. Judges are not likely to question or challenge the reliability of Côr Aran records, as such behavior could be interpreted as criticism of the Usurper's rule. As for the accused, it is difficult to defend oneself against such charges whose sources (real or contrived) remain undisclosed "for security reasons." These rules make Côr Aran files a highly effective weapon in blackmail attempts and other forms of naked coercion.

2.2.8 FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Kin-strife has had a significant impact upon the rest of Middle-earth, and neighboring realms view the new King as either a promise or a peril to their well-being. Consequently, there are many outside the realm of Gondor who have a stake in whether Castamir endures or perishes. Indeed, much of the King's own security depends in part upon his relationship to these foreign powers.

THE NORTH KINGDOM

The Kin-strife has had profound implications for the realm of Arthedain in the North. The victory of Pelargir has secured a regular supply of much needed grain from the south to feed those who lost their means of subsistence in the conflagration of 1409. In return, King Araphor sends timber and other raw materials to Belfalas Bay for Castamir's ship-building projects. The ancient haven of Tharbad is the vital link in this traffic of goods between north and south.

Araphor did not intervene in the struggle for the succession in Gondor—nor could he have, given his ongoing conflict with Angmar—but it was clear that he would favor the Captain of Ships over Eldacar. Because of the renewed importance of the haven, the Usurper has ordered a company of ships to Tharbad, and has placed them under the command of Araphor's captain with the task of securing the Gwathló against the near-anarchy now reigning in what was once Cardolan. In practice, Castamir's naval contingent and Araphor's garrison maintain the haven as a shared jurisdiction.

THE REALMS OF HARAD

The men of the Harad are ruled by Kings whose patrimony represents the legacy of three thousand years of Dúnadan hegemony in Middle-earth. These dominions are client-kingdoms, whose continued existence depends upon the patronage of an outside power, a need which is fulfilled in part by sending their sons as "hostages" to the court of the King in Gondor. This practice guarantees the continuity of their ruling houses, for it is one of the duties of the Dúnadan King to ensure the succession of a chosen heir to his heritage. In return for the enforcement of their will through the military might of Gondor, the rulers of the Harad swear oaths of friendship and non-interference with the South-kingdom.

As the rift in power grew between Pelargir and Osgiliath, ambitious Southron princelings began to offer their services to the Captain of Ships with hopes of future favor. Castamir made timely use of their pledges in order to secure much needed land forces for the coming struggle against Eldacar. Those who had been shrewd enough to respond to Castamir's need were well-rewarded when the new King came into power, and they have continued to play an important military role in support of the Usurper.

In the year 1372, those Southron kingdoms within the sphere of Gondor's influence banded together to form an alliance of common interest. This confederacy was brought about by the hand of Zimrakhil, a prophetic voice of mixed Southron and Númenórean descent who advocated united support for the Usurper. This league of some twenty warlords works to protect the caravan routes to Harondor, Umbar, and points south to the benefit of their Gondorian patrons. Zimrakhil and his brother, Belphegor, are the chosen spokesmen and representatives of this alliance, and both are received in Umbar as ambassadors of the Haradrim (see Section 2.3.2).

By contrast, for rulers of the Raj and of the realms that lie beneath the Yellow Mountains in the far south, the Kin-strife was experienced primarily as economic loss. The needs of war in the north during the struggle for the crown halted the trade in luxury goods on which the southern realms depend. The monetary instability resulting from the new King's unwise policies, combined with the popular distrust of strangers now rampant in Gondor, has not endeared these realms to the Usurper's reign. But while most magnates in the Raj would prefer a more sensible ruler in the north, their lack of knowledge about the situation in far off Gondor blinds them to any alternative. The principal aim of the mercantile rulers of the far south is therefore to recover pre-war levels of trade and to avoid conflict with the Usurper's invincible fleet. The Southrons seek to acquire reliable information concerning political developments in Gondor, as well as security for their ships and cargo.

The armies of the Storm King, on the northern slopes of the Yellow Mountains, have some effect on the southward trade, but are otherwise of little concern. These debates cause a great deal of concern among the Regents of Bozisha-Dar, as their city could well be viewed as a stepping-stone on the way by Castamir's navy. Hence, they are extremely interested in determining whether any serious plans exist for a such a military venture.

KHAZAD-DÛM AND LÓRIEN

Durin's folk have profited greatly from the Kin-strife in their capacity as weapon-smiths, though Eldacar's withdrawal into Rhovanion has made traffic along the Anduin less certain. Consequently, Tharbad has become the chief market for their goods, which they sell indiscriminately to anyone offering gold or silver.

The people of Amroth and Nimrodel, on the other hand, do not allow themselves to become entangled in the affairs of mortals. They are concerned with events in the South-kingdom only as these may implicate the hand of Dol Guldur (which, if Sauron's efforts are at all successful, will not happen). Nevertheless, Amroth may seek out Dúnedain for news of their realm, and might even bid them gather further tidings for him. Neither the King of Lórien nor any of his folk will set foot inside the Usurper's realm, except for the purpose of departing over the sea from Edhellond in Belfalas.

THE LAND OF RHOVANION

The wide lands beyond the Anduin have been an independent realm since the year 1250. During the nearly two hundred years since Minalcar the Regent recognized the Northman Prince Vidugavia as King of Rhovanion Vidugavia's descendants have ruled that realm in an unbroken line. Much of their success has depended upon their continued alliance with the heirs of Anárion, beginning with Valacar's marriage to Vidumavi, and the Northmen intend to keep it that way. It is therefore not surprising that the exiled Eldacar should have been given sanctuary by his mother's kinsmen in Rhovanion.

The kingdom of Rhovanion is ruled by Vidurafin, great-grandson of Vidugavia. For him, the Kin-strife began when his father's cousin was driven from the burning embers of Osgiliath, and he has declared a blood-feud with the Usurper. In his outrage at being thus addressed by one of lesser race, King Castamir has sent emissaries into Rhovanion, demanding the surrender of Eldacar and the abasement of Vidurafin before his true master. In public, Castamir speaks haughtily of open war with Rhovanion, yet in private he realizes that growing internal dissent among his own subjects must be dealt with first; moreover, the King is more concerned with the strength of his fleets than with the subjugation of profitless northern lands. Although he recognizes the potential threat posed by the surviving Eldacar and his allies, the Usurper deems it an impotent one.

THE ISTARI

During the Witch-king's invasion of Arthedain and Cardolan in the year 1409, the wizard Curunír first gave serious thought to the Palantíri, and began to take a keen interest in the surviving legacies of fallen Númenor. For many years he availed himself of the hospitality of King Araphor of Arthedain, and grew wise in the lore concerning the character and use of the Seven Stones of Eldamar. When news came to the north of the civil war in Gondor and of the loss of the Osgiliath-stone, Curunír resolved to journey into the South-kingdom to see what lore could be recovered from the destruction wrought by the Kin-strife.

The Wizard was shown honor in Gondor as a trusted friend of King Araphor, and Castamir granted him access to all the repositories of lore in the realm. After inspecting the ruins of Osgiliath and failing to recover the lost Stone from its watery fate, Curunír decided to explore the Hall of Old Books at Minas Anor. The Wizard plays no role in the ongoing conflict between the loyalists and the traditionalists, but respects the laws of Gondor and the authority of its recognized King.

2.2.9 LOYALIST OPPOSITION

All Dúnedain who respect the laws of Númenor will submit to a "rightful King" (this being defined either by legitimate succession or by unanimous recognition by the Council of Gondor). Had Eldacar perished in the siege of Osgiliath, his usurper would now stand unchallenged. Eldacar, however, is not dead. He continues to advance his claim for any who will have him. For those who would oppose Castamir (for whatever reason), Eldacar's existence legitimizes their continuing rebellion as an act of fidelity; hence, they name themselves "loyalists." But while all loyalists seek the Usurper's downfall, not all would see Eldacar enthroned. Many are still of a mind that Valacar's decision was ill-made and should be rectified by a more worthy claimant.

Because of the great distance of his exile, Eldacar is unable to organize and coordinate loyalist resistance within the Usurper's dominion; consequently, such resistance must emerge and survive of its own accord. Nevertheless, Eldacar sends many agents into Gondor with limited and well-defined tasks, such as determining the strength and placement of Castamir's military forces. Such individuals must evade the Usurper's border garrisons, and then successfully complete their penetration into Gondor. From the exiled King's sanctuary of Buhr Widu beneath the eaves of the Greenwood to Minas Anor is a twenty-five day ride, and for a lone messenger to reach Aglarond takes thirty.

ORGANIZATION

Although every loyalist group is independent and uses its own methods to oppose the Usurper, operating in the shadow of a tyrant presents certain common obstacles to all forms of resistance. Lack of coordination between groups carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. Should the Côr Aran destroy one group of loyalists, others will not necessarily be endangered (since a woman or man cannot betray what he or she does not know). On the other hand, because loyalists for the most part act without knowledge of each other's goals, they may unwittingly come into conflict, typically resulting in confusion and potential failure.

Every group must have leadership and organization with a clear chain of command in order to survive. Members must have well-defined tasks and an agreed-upon plan of action in the eventuality that they are discovered by the Côr Aran. Loyalist groups must also incorporate or have access to specialists able to perform the following vital functions: healing the wounded, obtaining supplies (legally or illegally), storing the group's possessions, acquiring necessary information, and hiding wanted individuals. Information concerning the activities of a group must necessarily be disclosed only on a need-to-know basis. If a piece of vital information ends up in the wrong hands, it could bring the group's work to an end and its members to the gallows.

Castamir's efficient lines of communication similarly place loyalist groups at a disadvantage, since their opponents are able to exchange information with greater rapidity than themselves (it is difficult to warn resistance groups of incriminating information en route to the Côr Aran cell in a neighboring city). Intercepting the King's couriers is punishable by death, but is often necessary in order to thwart the enemy and save lives.

RECRUITMENT

It is inevitable that some loyalists will perish in the struggle, and in order for a resistance group to continue achieving its goals its numbers must be replenished. The search for new members is itself fraught with constant danger, since there are no outward signs separating the trustworthy from the treacherous. Hence, it is critical for group leaders to accurately judge a potential member's strengths and weaknesses. Limiting recruitment to personal friends is no security, since even the best can break under extraordinary circumstances and even turn traitor.

RELATIONS WITH THE POPULACE

For the most part, loyalist groups are islands of resistance in a sea of complacency. While many in Gondor have little love for Castamir, few are willing to risk their lives and families for the loyalist cause. The Usurper has eyes and ears everywhere, and those discovered tend to end up in jail, strung from the local gallows, or simply vanish without a trace. Consequently, loyalist opposition is unable to rely upon the active support of the people. Moreover, many commoners are sorely tempted to ease their own personal hardships at the expense of others by turning informant for the Côr Aran, who offer attractive rewards for such cooperation.

PROPAGANDA

Convincing the populace that serious alternatives to the Usurper's reign exist is one of the loyalists' primary goals, and their arguments must be presented so as to make the loyalist position appear desirable, while placing Castamir in a bad light. Though a skilled forger might create "official" documents in order to disseminate "black propaganda" about the King, outright lies do not further the loyalist cause—once one's bluff has been called, one ceases to command attention.

In the absence of effective print technology, posters and leaflets are often less valuable than the spoken word in gaining the ear of the people. The spreading of rumors, backed up by occasional impromptu speeches in public places, are the most effective means of advertising one's cause. The latter method is particularly fraught with danger, however, since the orator must escape before the Côr Aran make their appearance on the scene.

Of course the Côr Aran are no strangers to propaganda. They utilize any and all methods to glorify the King. Such efforts, though, are often lost on the people, who are quite capable of recognizing the disparity between the realities of the Usurper's rule and the claims of his supporters. For this reason, the Côr Aran have sought rather to blacken the name of the loyalists, portraying them as ruthless terrorists on the basis of those few occasions when loyalist groups have dealt violently with the populace. They are aware of the fragmented character of loyalist resistance and exploit resistors' ignorance of other groups by staging incidents in their name, or by issuing self-deprecating "propaganda" calculated to discredit their cause in the eyes of the people.

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Armed loyalist groups, whose chief objective is to harass and preoccupy the Usurper's men, infest the northern reaches of Castamir's realm—Ithilien, Anórien, Calenardhon, Enedhwaith, and even Osgiliath. These groups consist of lightly-armed bands of scouts and rogues who live off the land. They move fast and engage all enemies they meet, but fade quickly away whenever they encounter strong and well-organized opposition (since they cannot expect to win in a pitched battle). The King spends a disproportionate amount of time and resources hunting them down—mainly through the deployment of Daen or Southron auxiliaries—but these mercenary troops often harass the locals themselves, leaving little love for the Usurper among the country folk.

DEFECTING TO RHOVANION

It is difficult to travel between central Gondor and Rhovanion. There are Southron cavalry patrols in eastern Anórien (see Section 7.3.2) and outside Morannon (see Section 8.1.1), searching for infiltrators and other suspect persons from the north. The best route for a traveler from one of Gondor's big cities is through Anórien along the Great Western Road (posing as a peddler, troubadour, journeyman, or some other legitimate wanderer) and then northwards across the plains of Calenardhon, crossing the Anduin at the Southern Undeeps.

The route through North Ithilien is not recommended. It is currently a war-zone, beyond which lie the barren and uninhabited lands patrolled by Southrons garrisoned at Morannon. It is very hard to convince folk of any legitimate reason for journeying here.

Rhovanion's Talath Harroch—the "Horse Plain" between the Ash Mountains, the Greenwood, and the Inland Sea—is a flat prairie covered with tall grass and with few terrain features. While some very strategic roads cross this vast, windswept lawn, it accommodates few settlements.

The Men Rómen (S. "East Way") runs east from the Southern Undeeps, passing through the Gondorian settlements of Romenost, Thorontir, and Warfinger. At the latter, the road turns north and continues to the town of Ilanin at the Celduin river. Romenost was the residence of the governor for the territory of Dor Rhúnen. Denethor, the current governor, supported Eldacar from the beginning of the Kin-strife, and so defected with his entire territory.

The Men-in-Araw (S. "Oromë's Road"; lit. "Way of Oromë") begins at Buhr Widu in the Bight. It forks at Buhr Waldmarh, with the southern part curving along the edge of the Greenwood, passing through Strayhold and ending in Romenost. The northern fork goes in a roughly east-north-eastern direction through Buhr Ailgra to Buhr Mahrling at the junction of the Carnen and the Celduin rivers.

The three Gondorian settlements are in loyalist hands, and their inhabitants—both Gondorians and Northmen—are staunch supporters of Eldacar. The Northmen of the region are also pro-Eldacar, though less fervently, since they have little interest in Gondorian internal politics. They support him due to his descent from a Northman Prince.

2.3 THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING

Eldacar desires to regain his throne and works hard to achieve this goal, patiently awaiting the right moment for his return. The deposed King takes refuge among his mother's kinsfolk at Buhr Widu in Rhovanion, far beyond the reach of Castamir. Eldacar's exact whereabouts are known to only a very few individuals in Gondor (most of whom are trusted loyalists).

Posing as a cousin of Vidurafin, Eldacar works with a trusted circle of relatives and confidantes to prepare for his return to Gondor. Most of the inhabitants of Buhr Widu are aware of his true identity, but will pretend otherwise to protect their kinsman. The majority of Gondor's inhabitants possess only a vague knowledge of Rhovanion and have never heard of Buhr Widu.

As long as some in Gondor still have faith in him, Eldacar can hope to be welcomed back one day as King. Nonetheless, being unable to lead or coordinate loyalist efforts from his distant abode, the exiled King is constrained to direct all of his energies toward the gathering of information. Being well-acquainted with Castamir's oppressive policies from personal experience and the reports of his spies, Eldacar is convinced that the Usurper's disposition will bring about a timely end to his reign.

Eldacar's two immediate goals are to judge the strengths and weaknesses of his opposition, and to assure loyalist groups in Gondor that their true King has not forgotten their struggle. To this end, Eldacar secretly sends emissaries to inspire his supporters at home. These emissaries are occasionally able to give loyalists valuable information to aid them against Castamir. In order to avoid drawing attention, the exiled King prefers to employ native Gondorians possessed of some prior knowledge of the targeted area. They make safer emissaries than his Northman supporters; however, many need help while traveling outside civilized bounds.

The exiled King realizes the dangers involved in sending spies into Gondor, and will risk this only when he has need of specific information. At other times, Eldacar contents himself with news gained from traveling merchants or refugees. The King is greatly concerned that his struggle against Castamir not be carried out in any way that might endanger or betray the ideals of the loyalist cause.

Eldacar would never, for instance, order or consent to an assassination attempt upon one of the Usurper's men. Such a deed would neither weaken Castamir's rule nor alleviate the sufferings of the populace, as it would bring retaliation against the innocent and would probably only result in the officer's replacement by another man of equal cruelty. Such ideals are not shared by the Usurper, who would happily order his rival's assassination, if he could but discover his whereabouts.

KING VIDURAFIN (1382-1450)

Vidurafin, the great-grandson of Vidugavia, has been King of Rhovanion since the passing of his own father in 1422. Although the years begin to weigh heavily upon him, according to the fate of lesser Men, he embodies the fearless spirit of the Northmen. Vidurafin is deemed mighty among the Waildungs. The Éothraim of Rhovanion have united under his banner in defense of Eldacar, and Vidurafin's influence over affairs in the North has greatly increased as a result of the asylum he has given to his kinsman. Vidurafin's commitment to his father's cousin is grounded in his kinship, and in his belief that only "Vinitharya's" (Eldacar's) restoration to the throne of the South-kingdom will guarantee the security of his own dominion beyond Anduin.

Vidurafin is a tall and sturdy man with grey, though balding, hair and grey eyes. Strong-willed, he defers to no one save Eldacar. Even then, he accords such respect in large part out of custom, loyalty, and respect.

PRINCE VIDUSTAIN (1412-1487)

Vidustain, the eldest son of Vidurafin, is a valiant warrior who excels in riding and the exercise of arms. The young Prince is single-minded and hot of mood, and is loathe to heed the counsel of others (save for that of Vinitharya, whom he greatly esteems). Vidustain's favored pastime is hunting upon the plains, though he dreams of one day riding through the gates of Osgiliath behind the returning King.

Though his hair is fair and long, Vidustain looks very much like his father.

ELDACAR VINITHARYA (1274-1490)

Vinitharya, the exiled King, has forbidden any to call him by his true name while he resides in Rhovanion. Instead, he bide those around him to use the name of "Vulfila." A vigorous and outgoing fellow, Eldacar maintains a jovial demeanor rooted in the manners common to Rhovanion, enjoying singing, hunting, and story-telling. Though Eldacar strongly desires vengeance for his exile and the death of his eldest son, Ornendil, he does not allow this anger to consume him.

Eldacar shows no sign of aging more swiftly than his father, and has all the appearance of a mighty Dúnadan lord. Only in his sandy-brown hair and blue eyes is Vinitharya's Northman heritage revealed. While in Buhr Widu, he wears the Éothraim garb of his kinsmen.

AERINEL (1245-1512)

Eldacar's wife is also his second cousin, being the daughter of Coratar of Minas Anor. Aerinel's marriage to the future King was arranged by Valacar long before his death, with a view to cementing the allegiance of Anórien (a hope which ultimately proved to be in vain). Aerinel went with her husband into exile, and rues bitterly her father's surrender of Minas Anor which led to the death of Ornendil.

Aerinel is a small and slender woman, with short brown hair and piercing grey eyes. However, she is a somewhat withdrawn person and prefers to be silent at public gatherings. She is currently dressed like a high-ranking Northron woman, though her Dúnadan ancestry is obvious to anyone who gets more than a quick glance at her.

ALDAMIR (1327-1540)

Aldamir is Eldacar's oldest surviving son and therefore his heir. He accompanied his father into exile following the siege of Osgiliath, and has since taken a central role in the ordering of the exiles in Rhovanion. Eldacar has instructed Aldamir in the art of government, as he is destined to succeed him one day, and Aldamir personally handles many of his father's daily obligations in Buhr Widu and abroad. He is also responsible for recruiting and training his father's growing army.

Aldamir partakes in the Dúnadan heritage of his mother more than his father's Northman blood, but he is clearly beholden to the ways and customs of Rhovanion in his mannerism and attire.

VINYARION (1438-1621)

After a year of mourning for Ornendil, Aerinel bore Eldacar a third son in Rhovanion. In 1441, Vinyarion is little more than an infant of three years. Jealously guarded by his parents, Vinyarion is rarely seen by any in Buhr Widu, except Eldacar's relatives and closest friends.

The three year old boy resembles his father a bit. However, he is dressed like any Northron child and anyone who does not know his lineage would be unable to see that he is a noble Dúnadan.

PRINCE HARITH (1385-1473)

Son and heir to King Kóashûn of Kóanoz (in northern Far Harad), Harith was sent as a hostage to the court of Valacar in the waning years of his reign. Distrustful of the prophet Zimrakhil, Kóashûn refused to join the league of pro-Castamir warlords founded in 1372 (see Section 2.2.8). Still, fearing that the new confederacy might turn against him, the Southron King resolved to seek the favor of Osgiliath by sending his only son.

Harith did homage to the Dúnadan King at the age of eight, pledging his service to Valacar and his house until the time should come for him to succeed his own father. Eldacar became fast friends with the Southron Prince, who saved his life during the siege of Osgiliath (before the two fled to Rhovanion). Next to Vidurafin, Harith is Eldacar's most trusted ally. The exiled King frequently seeks out Harith's counsel in strategic matters, and often entrusts to him the command of military operations in Rhovanion. When not on a mission, Harith acts as Eldacar's personal bodyguard.

The Southron's loyalty to the exiled King is absolute, though he greatly desires to return to his own father's realm. Few tidings concerning the fate of his homeland reach far Rhovanion; but this much Harith knows: that while the Kings of the Harad look to the favor of Pelargir, the preservation of Kóanoz rests upon Eldacar's overthrow of the Usurper. For this cause he will struggle.

Harith is black-skinned and dark-eyed, making him eminently unique among the fair-skinned and fair-haired folk of Rhovanion; accordingly, he makes no attempt to conceal his identity, and prefers to don the traditional golden and scarlet attire of his homeland. He is a tall man for his people, equaling any Northman and surpassing many Dúnedain. His crimson surcoat proudly bears the device of his father's house—the sickled moon above the Apysaic characters for Kóanoz in gold.

MAGOR (1386-1542)

Magor is a trusted retainer of Eldacar who was put in charge of certain espionage activities in confederate-held territory when the civil war broke out. This assignment suited Magor's temperament and talents—his methods being only slightly less ruthless than those of the Côr Aran, and often a great deal more subtle—and he has continued to serve his King with complete loyalty as an itinerant spymaster for the loyalist cause.

Magor has the dark hair and grey eyes typical of a Dúnadan, but is unusually short and fat for his race. He is very knowledgeable about a variety of subjects and often assumes the role of a harmless dilettante or scholar.

2.4 THE ENEMY

Whether or not Sauron had a hand in provoking the Kin-strife, it is clear that the civil war in Gondor and its aftermath have been glad tidings to the ears of Dol Guldur. The Dúnedain of the South-kingdom are the implacable foes of Sauron, and their realm now bars the way to his ancient stronghold of Mordor. He will not rest until they are either destroyed or utterly enslaved to his will.

2.4.1 SAURON AND THE KIN-STRIFE

When Sauron took shape again around the year 1000 of the Third Age, Gondor was nearly at the height of its power. Without the One Ring to aid him, his strength would not be great enough to openly challenge the might of the South-kingdom. Instead, he would have to work in secret towards the division of Gondor's military prowess.

But the Usurper's reign presents itself as a double-edged sword. Although the Dúnedain are now indeed divided into two opposing camps, the victory of either side will not be completely advantageous to Sauron. The dilemma is quite simple. If Castamir prevails over Eldacar in the end, then the Usurper's neglect for the land and his severance of all ties with the Northmen will open the road to Mordor. By the same token, however, the mainstay of Gondor's military power—the fleets—will remain intact under the rule of Pelargir. On the other hand, if Eldacar succeeds in reclaiming his kingdom, the power of the fleets will wane. Gondor's focus will turn toward the North, where Eldacar's strong ties with Rhovanion will continue to act as a hedge between Dol Guldur and Mordor.

In the age-long perspective of Sauron the Maia, his return to Mordor can wait—indeed, it must wait—for the dissolution of the fleets. And he knows that Eldacar's return will bring that to pass—just as surely as dissension among the sons of Eärendur led to the fragmentation of Arnor six hundred years ago. Perhaps ironically, then, Sauron's chief interest in the Kin-strife lies in preserving the exiled Eldacar for his return to Gondor in power.

But the Lord of the Rings does not intend to leave the Dúnedain wholly to their own devices in accomplishing his purpose, nor will he acquiesce in the anticipated split between Umbar and Gondor. In fact, Sauron intends to utilize both the coming and the present confusion in Gondor to establish his direct influence over his ancient enemies, if may be to bring them under his dominion.

The Dark Lord holds the allegiance of two very different powers for achieving this end. The first of these powers is Adûnaphel the Nazgûl, who commands his servants in Harondor and the South. The second is an independent Maia-spirit, whose minions are now spread throughout much of Gondor.

2.4.2 ADÛNAPHEL'S INFLUENCE

Adûnaphel took shape again around 1050, and began repairing her ruined stronghold of Lugarlûr a few years later. Except in her immediate surroundings, however, Adûnaphel does not impose herself as a worldly ruler, preferring subtle and indirect methods to accomplish the will of her master. Now, after nearly four centuries of rebuilding her former power, she has gained influence over nearly all of the kingdoms of the Harad. Her influence among some of the tribes in Harondor and other areas controlled by Gondor is small but growing.

Although the Gondorian authorities have been aware of a growing Evil among the Southron tribes for some decades, there are still senior civil servants in the Anduin valley who regard this Dark presence as mere nursery tales. There is a growing adherence to different forms of cults of Darkness, whose lawlessness is becoming more common with a rising ill-will towards Gondor. Yet its true source remains hidden even to those who speculate as to its cause, since they are unaware of Adûnaphel's presence at Lugarlûr. Some blame the Storm King, but most agree that he is too far away to have any significant influence in Near Harad.

The leaders of Umbar and the coasts have begun to counter the Dark influence, and have succeeded in slowing its progress. But the Kin-strife has forced the authorities to look in other directions. Funds for gifts, bribes and informants have dried up, while troops, diplomats, and competent administrators have been transferred elsewhere. In spite of this, some—especially naval officers—advocate a major southern expedition to combat the Storm King's legions.

A Gondorian military action could be very dangerous to Adûnaphel, so one of her primary objectives is to keep her presence and true identity secret. Another objective is to monitor Gondorian military activities and their knowledge of her. She has sent a few trusted emissaries to infiltrate the cities of southern Gondor. However, their number must be small in order to avoid the watchful eyes of the King's crows. Desert tribes under her control occasionally raid caravans, but these activities are indistinguishable from ordinary banditry.

ADÛNAPHEL

The Dark Lady of Lugarlûr is one of the Nazgûl—Sauron's most terrible servants—who have returned with their master to trouble the world for yet another age. Of the nine mortal Men doomed to die, Adûnaphel is one of the three who were of Númenórean origin; she is also the only female of their number.

Adûnaphel began her career as one of the King's Men who came to Middle-earth in search of dominion over Lesser Men. Having reached the Cape of Umbar in S.A. 1914, she took up her abode at Vamag and proceeded to draw the coastlands as far north as Harnen under her power. During her stay in Vamag, Adûnaphel discovered the then unwielded Kuilëondo and the spirits it bound (see Section 2.3.3 below). The sorcerous gem awakened anew in her the desire for deathlessness, but she was not so foolish as to trust to its false promises, and refrained from using its powers. Nevertheless, her encounter with and study of this evil artifact rendered Adûnaphel pliable to the greater lies of Sauron when he approached her with the offer of a Ring of Power.

A failed attempt to capture the city and haven of Umbar in S.A. 2280 forced Adûnaphel to withdraw from the coasts, where the power of Númenor was strongest. The Kuilëondo lay masterless in the abandoned stronghold of Vamag; but Adûnaphel remembered it, and bade her minions mark into whose hands it fell. Meanwhile, Adûnaphel had established her new fortress of Lugarlûr and was swiftly gaining sway over the kingdoms of Near Harad.

Adûnaphel fled Lugarlûr at her master's submission to Ar-Pharazôn, seeking refuge in the Black Land until Sauron's return to Middle-earth after Akallabêth. For the remainder of the Second Age, she commanded the southern allies of Mordor against the newly-founded Dúnadan realm of Gondor, invading South Ithilien in 3429. She was robbed of her "fana" (form) by her master's downfall, and was forced to wander the houseless lands as a spirit of malice until Sauron was able to take shape again—more than a thousand years later.

The Nazgûl returned to her former abode of Lugarlûr around the year 1050 of the Third Age, just after Hyarmendacil had definitively brought Harondor and the coastlands of Harad under Dúnadan rule. The removal or co-optation of Gondorian hegemony has been Adûnaphel's chief concern for the last four hundred years. With the rise of Calimehtar and his descendants, the Dark Lady of Lugarlûr saw an opportunity to work the will of her master against the Dúnedain, while at the same time regaining her influence over the Haradrim.

Unwilling to risk detection by the vigilance of the men of Gondor, Adûnaphel chose to entrust her Black Númenórean servants, Zimrakhil and Belphegor, with the task of bringing the kingdoms of the Harad under her shadow (see Section 2.2.8). By encouraging the formation of a pro-Pelargir confederacy, Adûnaphel contributed to the Kin-strife and so to the weakening of the South-kingdom. At the same time, the display of Southron loyalty to the Usurper has resulted in a lessening of overt Dúnadan presence in Near Harad, making it easier for Adûnaphel to establish her former dominion.

The fate of the Kuilëondo was hidden from Adûnaphel during her thousand year exile following Sauron's downfall, but as the advent of the Kin-strife brought more of her spies into Gondor, she soon learned of its presence at Benish Armon (see Section 2.3.3). When the circumstances of its movement to that place became known to her, Adûnaphel began to contemplate how she might bend its powers to the service of her master.

Adûnaphel has rarely been beheld by mortal eyes since she became a Ringwraith, and few can endure the terror that her presence inspires. Like all of the Nazgûl, her form is invisible to the waking eye, and she must clothe herself in order to give shape to her nothingness. In the fastness of Lugarlûr, the Dark Lady gives audience to her closest servants girded in black mail. Her face is concealed behind a visored helm wrought in the shape of a Fell-turtle's head. A gold-inlaid broadsword hangs in a scabbard at her side.

ZIMRAKHIL (1367-1452†)

Adûnaphel's chief servant is Zimrakhil, a sorcerer of Black Númenórean inspiration who has been instrumental in forging the Southron confederacy of Near Harad. Zimrakhil was able to gain the confidence of the Haradan Kings in part because he shares in their ancestry, being of mixed blood. He and his brother now act as representatives for the confederacy, and are recognized by Castamir as ambassadors. Although their official residence is in Umbar (see Section 4.2.3), Zimrakhil spends much of his time in the Harad among his own people, or elsewhere in Gondor on some diplomatic errand. Because of his importance, the Usurper has allowed him to attend the Council of Gondor in Minas Anor (see Section 7.7).

Zimrakhil does not remember his given name, but believes himself to be the resurrected form of the last prophet of the cult of Melkor in Umbar, who was slain by King Eärnil in the year 933 (see Section 4.8.1). He was instructed in the ways of dark sorcery by Adûnaphel herself, and takes the Dark Lady as proof of Melkor's promise of deathlessness to those that serve him.

Zimrakhil's loathsome arts have not been without effect upon his body or sanity. During his initiation at Lugarlûr, the sorcerous trials to which he was subjected robbed Zimrakhil of the flesh from his right forearm, leaving him with a skeletal hand charged with unnatural energies. The mad sorcerer regards this as a sign of Melkor's favor, but keeps it carefully concealed by glove and sleeve when dealing with the Dúnedain.

The sorcerer comports himself with extreme diplomatic form, presenting a facade of total neutrality and business-like aloofness in the execution of his public duties. When dealing with Castamir or his traditionalist supporters, Zimrakhil plays up to their chauvinism, freely acknowledging his own racial inferiority and assuring them of their own righteousness. He is highly regarded by many of the Usurper's officers, who see him as one of the few less-than-pure-blooded men around who "know their place." The sorcerer wallows in his theatrical bootlicking, delighting in the ease with which Dúnadan pride works to its own undoing.

Zimrakhil is a tall, gaunt man with a hawk nose and dark eyes. His distinctively "predatory" appearance readily lends itself to a comparison with a desert vulture. He wears long, flowing black robes and a matching glove on his right hand. Although his dark skin betrays his Haradan blood, Zimrakhil's facial features are recognizably Dúnadan.

BELPHEGOR (1394-1450†)

Zimrakhil's younger brother is endowed with less sorcerous knowledge, but this handicap does not hinder Belphegor from being an effective bodyguard. Belphegor is a follower, and obeys his brother in all things. Only rarely does he speak or take an active role in Zimrakhil's diplomatic functions, preferring to remain in the background.

Belphegor looks every bit an enforcer type, with a towering frame and powerful arms. His attire is uniformly black, though he does not wear robes like his brother. An immaculately trimmed beard leaves him looking even less Dúnadan than Zimrakhil, and his impassive demeanor often leads people to miss the brother's kinship. Belphegor carries no weapons—he is a weapon.

2.4.3 THE CULT OF BENISH ARMON

In 1441, Sauron's ultimate design against the South-kingdom is to raise up a new usurper of sorts—but one who, unlike Castamir, will call him "master." This is a tall order, and Sauron knows it; but, even with their power to be divided as he hopes, the Dark Lord cannot at present foresee victory in open war against the men of Gondor. Instead, he searches among the Dúnedain for one who would be both recognized as King, and yet pliant to his will. Such a man does exist, but he can only be brought under the Dark Lord's influence with the help of the cult of Benish Armon.

THE PRINCE OF CATS

Benish Armon is an ancient ruin in the midst of the Anduin delta, which now serves as the den of a malevolent Maia-spirit: Tevildo, Prince of Cats. Tevildo and his nine feline "thanes" are the object of fear and worship for many among the Ethir-folk, who obey them as gods. The cat-spirits of Benish Armon have never served a greater power willingly, but have often been compelled to do so through sorcerous constraint.

Although they are not at present subject to the Dark Lord's will, the Prince of Cats and his thanes are bound by an ancient artifact—the Kuilëondo—which limits their power of movement to the confines of Benish Armon. The cats seek to be free from their bondage. In exchange for the cooperation of Tevildo and his cult, Sauron has promised the cats a means of escape from their imprisonment.

The cats of Benish Armon can only be released from the Kuilëondo's power by the hand of the one who bound them—or by someone related to that person through blood lineage. Fortuitously, the one who has the power to do this is the same person for whom the Dark Lord now seeks: Orodreth of Morthond, now "Neithan."

Tevildo and his thanes are, in fact, the very same cats which the nefarious Queen Berúthiel enslaved to do her bidding during the reign of Tarannon Falastur (T.A. 830-913). Berúthiel accomplished this by means of the Kuilëondo, during the days when she dwelt in the Ethir.

Although Tarannon is reckoned to have been the first childless King of Gondor, he nevertheless fathered a son through Berúthiel, whose existence was kept secret and not recorded in the Book of the Kings. This child was fostered by the first Prince of Morthond, himself childless, and so became the inheritor of that house. This means that the current son of the Prince of Morthond is a descendant of Berúthiel and is of the line of the Kings, though he does not know it. Moreover, Berúthiel was of royal Black Númenórean origin, making Orodreth the perfect candidate for Sauron's designs.

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE CULT

Following Berúthiel's exile at the hands of her husband, the spirits of Tevildo and his thanes were compelled to return to the place of their binding. Earlier, before Berúthiel had withdrawn to the King's House in Osgiliath with the cats, she had entrusted the Kuilëondo to one of her former handmaidens who had come from among the Ethir-folk. The Prince of Cats now persuaded this caretaker of their sorcerous prison to serve them in return for power and dominion over her kind. To this the girl agreed. From that time forward, those among the Ethir-folk who serve Benish Armon (whether out of fear or desire) have been led by the female descendants of Queen Berúthiel's handmaiden.

Although the cats were aware of the existence of Berúthiel's child, their temporary expulsion from Gondor prevented them from learning of the child's fate. One of the chief purposes of the cult has been to discover the truth concerning this matter, and (if possible) to locate any surviving descendant in the present who might be persuaded to release the cats from their bondage to the Kuilëondo. When Adûnaphel's spies came across an inscription among the ruins of Osgiliath which revealed the existence of the child and its secret fostering in Morthond (see Section 2.4.2), the Dark Lord sent emissaries to the mistress of Benish Armon with an offer.

SAURON'S ALLIANCE WITH THE CULT

Sauron's emissaries claimed knowledge of the identity of Berúthiel's descendant. They also argued that the ceremony necessary for the cats' release from the Kuilëondo could only be performed upon ground that had been sanctified to Melkor. The foundations of the Temple in Umbar would serve this purpose; but the Dark Lord's servants would deny entrance to the cult unless Tevildo fulfilled his part of the bargain—to bring Neithan over the threshold into the service of Darkness.

The second condition of Sauron's offer was that the cult should work to prepare the way for Neithan's future rise to power in Gondor. Although his twin royal lineage would be a necessary factor in convincing Neithan himself of his "true" destiny, to publicly reveal his connection with Tarannon (and, hence, with the Black Númenórean Berúthiel) would hardly endear him to the men of Gondor. In order, then, for his public claim to be persuasive, Neithan would have to appear as the most eligible candidate by other criteria. To begin with, this would mean that all other potentially legitimate contenders would have to be eliminated. Such a design might take years to achieve, but the confusion and disorder of the Usurper's reign offers a beginning. This is the task of Benish Armon.

THE CATS AND THE KUILËONDO

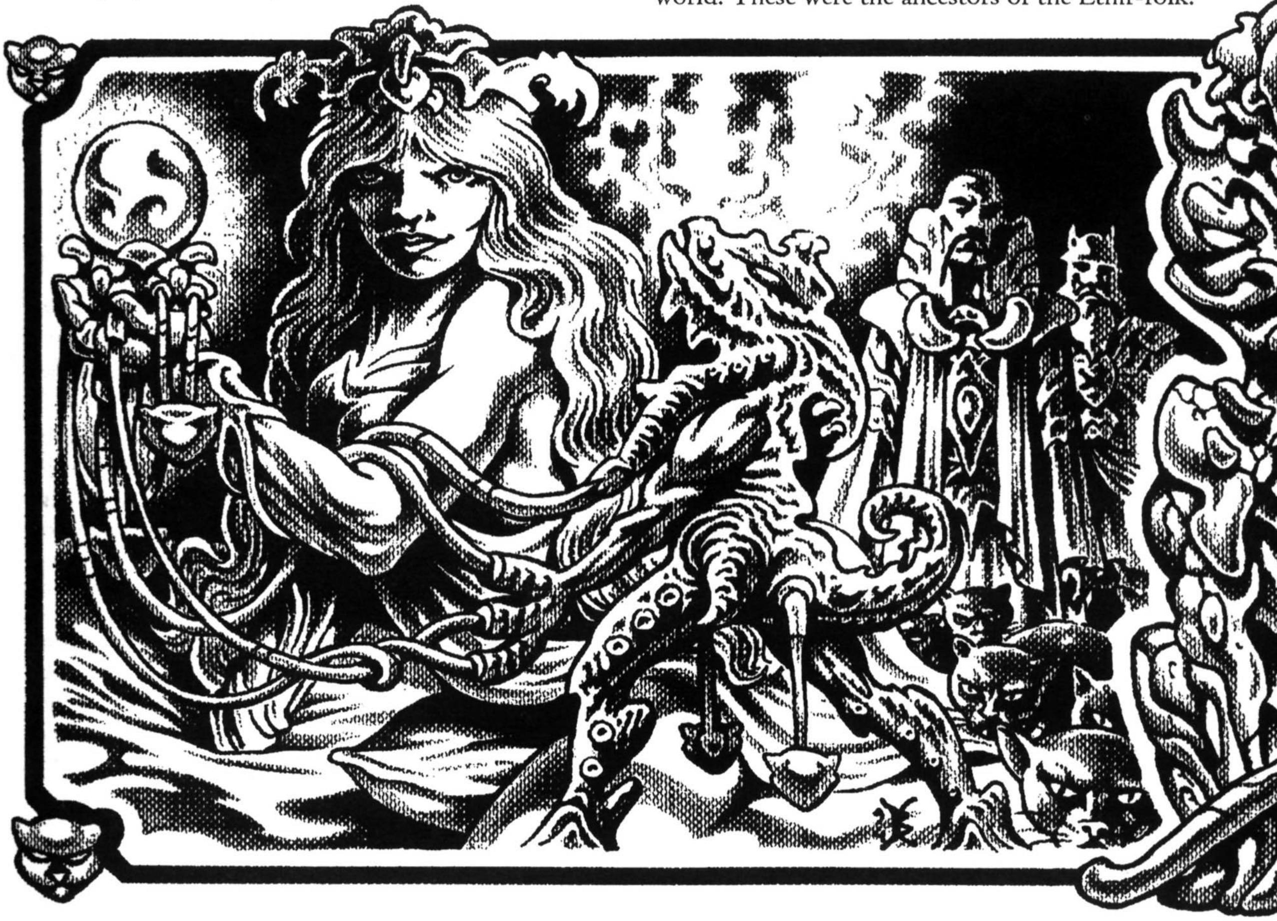
The Kuilëondo is a spherical ruby of black-reddish hue. It was one of the gems crafted by the Noldor in Aman which was consumed and later belched forth by Ungoliant. Through the poison of the spider and the arts of Morgoth, the virtues of the gem were transformed into their opposites. Instead of begetting light, the Kuilëondo devoured both light and life into a pool of darkness. Instead of bringing comfort to the heart, it dominated the spirit. Instead of restoring vigor, it artificially prolonged the life of the body—at the expense of the lives of others.

Morgoth bestowed this gem upon one of his mortal servants, who used its warped powers to enslave Tevildo and his thanes to do his bidding. This servant escaped the destruction of Beleriand during the War of Wrath, and found sanctuary on the coasts of Umbar. As the years of his life began to wane, he commanded the cats to bring him victims to be sacrificed for his own preservation. For the Kuilëondo absorbed thúle—the active life-force of the mortal spirit—through the blood of its victims, transferring this energy to its user. Therefore, the dwelling place of the cats and their master came to be called "Vamag" ("Blood-fell").

Although the gem itself changed hands, the essential being of the cats—their óre—remained trapped within the Kuilëondo for the greater part of the Second Age. This bondage prevented Tevildo or his thanes from assuming permanent fanar (Q. "forms"; lit. "veils"). It also limited the time and distance beyond the confines of the gem within which they could project their own thúle. All of this changed, however, when the cats tricked the most recent wielder of the Kuilëondo to free them.

This event took place at some point in the latter years of the Second Age, when Sauron had turned the Númenóreans to the worship of Melkor. Now freed, the cats remained in Vamag, filling it with horror; but with Akallabêth, the coasts of Middle-earth were changed and much of Vamag destroyed. The Prince of Cats abandoned this dwelling place in search of better hunting grounds, and so it was that the cats came to inhabit the Ethir.

Before the drowning of Númenor, the mouths of Anduin did not extend so far upriver. The change occurred with the opening of the Great Rift and the bending of the seas. Then, devouring waters encroached upon the lowlands that lay about its course, turning them into a wide delta. These lands had originally been inhabited by Daen-folk from the White Mountains, but the Daen were now forced to abandon their deluged homes and withdrew to higher ground. In their place came many Falathrim—coastal people from the South whose own homes had been likewise destroyed by the changing of the world. These were the ancestors of the Ethir-folk.



Handmaiden of Berúthiel

The new inhabitants brought with them tales of the lands they had left. Many among them remembered the horror of Vamag, although they hoped or believed that the destroying sea had now washed the earth clean of that evil. There was much lamentation when it was learned that this same horror now haunted the Ethir. The cats took for themselves fanar, and preyed upon the Ethir-folk.

The fate of the Kuilëondo since Tevildo's liberation was unknown, but it came into the possession of Queen Berúthiel, who used it to subject the cats to her will. The Ethir-folk worshipped her as their deliverer from the horror of Benish Armon. Berúthiel used Tevildo and his thanes to her own private ends. Now she is gone, though, and the fanar she granted to them is once more removed.

The peculiar circumstances under which Berúthiel bound the cats has further limited the their freedom. Whereas their previous servitude was linked only to the gem itself, their current subjection also binds them to a particular location. Until they are able to recover physical shapes, the spirits of Tevildo's thanes are blind beyond the confines of Benish Armon.

The Prince of Cats alone is exempt from this limitation. Tevildo is able to go wherever the Kuilëondo goes without losing any of his perceptive capabilities, and is able (within limits) to project his thúle outside the gem. By virtue of his Maia nature, the cat is also able to transfer certain powers to the bearer of the Kuilëondo.

THE POWERS OF THE KUILËONDO

Since its transformation at the hands of Morgoth and Ungoliant, the basic characteristic of the Kuilëondo has been the absorption and containment of thúle or "spirit," one of the three elements that make up all rational incarnate beings (e.g., Elves, Men, Maiar). Thúle is the vital energy which holds body and soul together, though it is not identical to the soul (Q. "Óre"). The principal difference between the óre and the thúle is that the latter may be transferred, used up or otherwise "spent" as a quantity of energy, whereas the former does not possess quantity, but is the essential core of a person's being, indestructible even by Eru. The active aspect of thúle is the will.

Thúle resides in blood, and the Kuilëondo absorbs thúle by absorbing blood. The gem is able to do this either through contact with a wounded person or through a grisly ritual involving blood sacrifice.

> **Note:** *Once absorbed, thúle may be drawn upon by the wielder of the gem for magical use (additional PPs = victim's Pr + In + Em / 20) or for artificial prolongation of the wielder's life.*

The capacity of the Kuilëondo to absorb thúle varies according to the biological and spiritual nature of its victim. Its power is only fully effective towards Men, since it is their unique doom that their óre escapes the Circles of the World permanently and irrevocably as soon as the link between body and soul is severed (unless Eru or the Valar directly intervene). This means that the gem can contain thúle from a mortal source indefinitely.

The Kuilëondo is less effective towards Elves, since it is their nature to be reincarnated in Aman should they die in Middle-earth before the End. The act of reincarnation reunites their thúle to their óre, which means that the wielder of the Kuilëondo can contain or make use of that thúle for a brief interim only. Hence, while Elven thúle could be temporarily co-opted for a boost in the wielder's magical power, any benefits accrued from the gem for the extension of one's life would be lost as soon as the victim's thúle was reincarnated into a new body

> **Note:** *Elven thúle can only be held by the Kuilëondo for a number of hours equal to the victim's SD divided by 10.*

Because Maiar are not incarnate by nature, their thúle cannot be severed from their óre. Instead of "absorbing" the energy of such creatures, the Kuilëondo simply binds their entire being within itself. If the gem's wielder is possessed of a strong enough will, he or she may be able to command the imprisoned spirits as well as draw upon their energy for magical use. At the same time, however, the inseparability of the Maia's thúle prevents the wielder from drawing upon it for the prolongation of life.

> **Note:** *In order to bind or absorb thúle, the wielder must overcome a victim's RR level. If a person approaches the (unwielded) gem with open wounds or a debilitating illness, he or she must resist versus the 50th level potency of the Kuilëondo's power. The effects of either scenario depend upon the nature of the being affected, as stated above.*

The ritual use of the Kuilëondo to extend life necessitates that the victim's heart be removed from the body and replaced with the gem before the victim dies. The wielder must utter a correct sequence of empowered words in order for the thúle absorbed from the victim's blood to be transferred to the wielder's own thúle.

> **Note:** *Welder must also overcome the RR level of victim's óre.*

Should this fail, the victim's thúle will remain trapped in the gem as magical energy, and the Kuilëondo will redirect its absorbing power upon the wielder.

> **Note:** *If the wielder succeeds in overcoming the victim's óre, he or she will stop aging for a number of months equal to the victim's Co divided by 5 + total number of previously sacrificed victims.*

Additional sacrifices can only be made after the efficacy of the initial sacrifice completes its course. Failure to repeat the ritual will result in the accelerated aging of the wielder's body and irrevocable loss of the ability to recommence the process.

TEVILDO'S POWERS

As previously stated, the Prince of Cats has developed means of projecting his thúle through the Kuilëondo, even though it remains a constraint and limitation upon his powers. Through the medium of the gem, Tevildo can do one of three things: (1) summon his thanes, (2) transfer certain powers to the wielder of the Kuilëondo as it pleases him, or (3) visibly project his presence out of the gem for a brief period of time. Each of these activities are subject to certain conditions.

SUMMONING

Tevildo's thanes lose their perceptive capabilities outside of Benish Armon; but his domination of these lesser spirits allows the Prince of Cats, through the Kuilëondo, to call them individually to his current position. This, however, can only be attempted on a night of the dark moon (the day of the month when they were bound by Berúthiel). Moreover, Tevildo's summons must be accompanied by a blood sacrifice, whose scent draws the keen-nosed cats to the desired location. The sacrifice must be performed with a ritual dagger only possessed by members of the cult.

In order to remain free of Benish Armon without fanar, Tevildo's thanes must feed upon mortal thúle. The cats do this by "infesting" a living victim's body (they are incorporeal). The effect of this infestation is the gradual corruption of the "host" body from within. Eventually, the victim's soul is severed and passes away, while the corpse becomes an empty husk, petrified into a tormented effigy of the person.

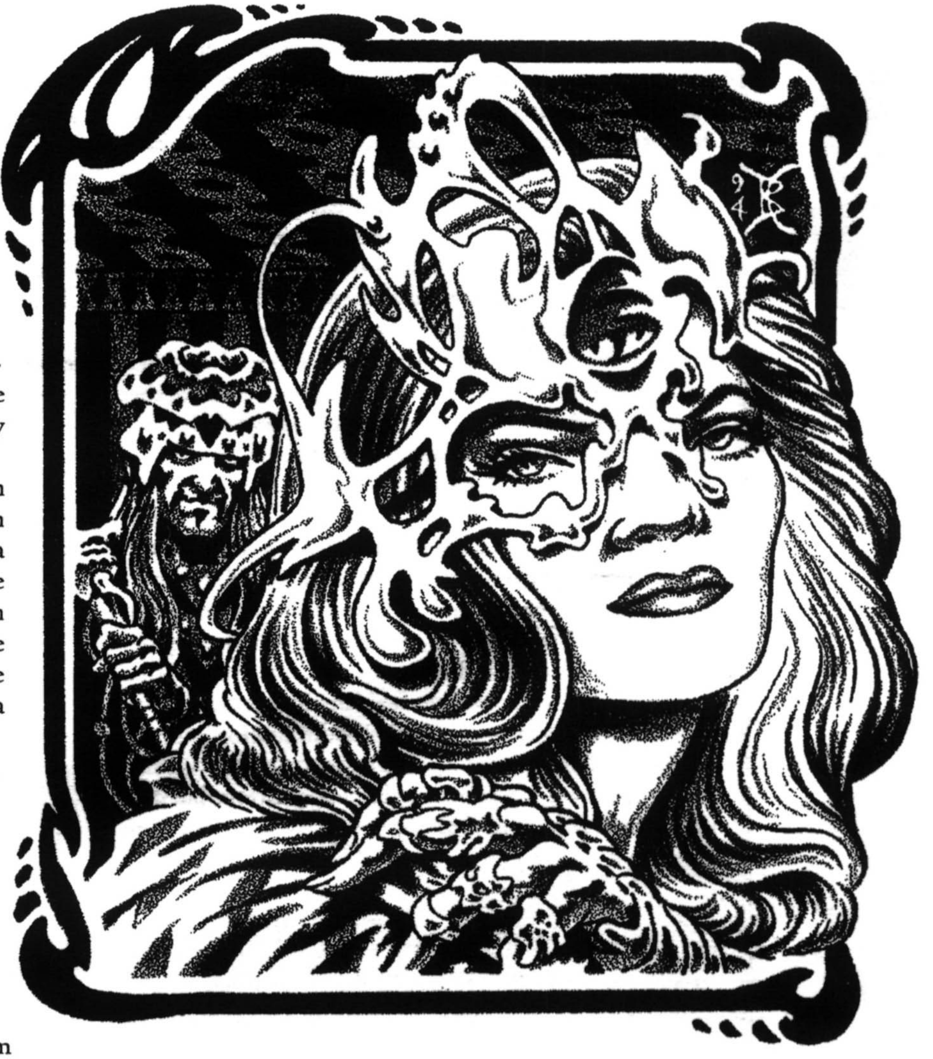
Note: *The infestation process reduces the victim's stats at a rate of 5 points per day, and can only be reversed by the most powerful healing magic.*

POWER TRANSFER

Because the Kuilëondo enables the transfer of thúle as magical energy, Tevildo is able to incorporate some of his own powers as a Maia into that exchange. In this way, the Prince of Cats gives assistance to the wielder of the gem beyond the pure availability of extra Power Points. The nature of this assistance depends in part upon the wielder and in part upon the nature of the goal to be accomplished.

As a sign of the cats' power and as proof of their covenant with the Ethir-folk who serve them, Tevildo has conferred the power of shape-shifting upon the mistress of the cult, enabling her to assume the form of a large hunting cat at will (and at no PP cost to her). This transformation (which takes one round) affects the body only, and anything the woman might be carrying with her in human form will be discarded. In addition to the accompanying feline abilities, all knowledge and human skills are retained while in cat-shape (though some of these may be unusable).

Tevildo's capacity to channel power through the gem extends to his generic Maia abilities to adapt the fana to its environment. This means that the Prince of Cats is able to grant heightened maneuvering skills to the gem's wielder (up to +100 bonus on all maneuvers related to climbing, jumping, hiding and sneaking) as well as increased speed in accomplishing these maneuvers.



Tirazôr speaks to Iriel

THE WHITE FACE

Without his fair fana, the naked visage of the Prince of Cats is terrible to look upon, and can drive mortal Men to madness. If the wielder of the Kuilëondo is in need, Tevildo may expend enough energy to project a luminous outline of his face about the gem. Except when he is inside Benish Armon, it is very power-consuming for the cat to reveal himself in this way (e.g., five times in one day would be taxing). The result is a greenish flash of light (a 20th level attack). Those that fail their RRs are left confused by horrible visions of cat-demons, which will last for a number of days equal to the failure of the RR (e.g., if a character failed the roll by 32%, the madness will last for 32 days). A failure of 50% or more results in permanent insanity.

IRIEL (1410-1450†)

The current mistress of Benish Armon is Iriel. She inherited leadership of the Ethir cult from her mother, and serves the cats as the ninth in a six ward year bloodline from Queen Berúthiel's handmaiden. She shares with her foremothers the gift of skin-changing, and her preferred shape is that of a black panther.

Iriel is actually half-Dúnadan. Her mother's first husband had been one of the Ethir-folk; however, he was slain by a company of soldiers from Pelargir, whom Valacar had sent to suppress the rumored blood cult. Iriel's mother sought out her husband's murderer and seduced him, becoming his mistress and later his wife. Once a daughter had been born to them, Iriel's mother assumed cat-shape and mauled the man to death in his bed.

Iriel's mother remained in Pelargir until Iriel and her twin brother Colfen were grown. The siblings also had a half-brother, Ulbar, who had been fathered by their mother's first husband. Iriel left Pelargir with her mother when news came that outlaw pirates from Eriador had made the Ethir their hideout. The newcomers ill-treated the folk of the Ethir, and the cult took measures to expel or subdue them.

Iriel's mother surrendered the leadership of the cult to her before dying from a poisoned wound gotten from the outlaws in an ambush, and Iriel swore vengeance against her mother's slayers. Having seen the might of the Captain of Ships in Pelargir, Iriel sent word to Colfen her brother to approach Castamir with news of the pirates, and to offer the assistance of the Ethir-folk in dealing with the problem if Pelargir would send troops to pacify them.

Castamir was grateful for this information, but had other plans. Instead of crushing the outlaws, he came to an agreement with them (under threat of bloody constraint): they would be allowed to practice their trade from the sanctuary of the Ethir on the condition that they would make themselves "available" to his occasional need for the (unofficial) violent enforcement of his will in Belfalas Bay (see Section 3.5.4). Those responsible for the death of Iriel's mother were exterminated as an example of the alternative to acceptance of Castamir's gracious offer, and Colfen was made captain of a river squadron dispatched to the Ethir to ensure that the remaining outlaws did not get out of hand.

The unexpected patronage of Pelargir made it possible for the cult to renew its search for Berúthiel's descendants. Both Iriel and Ulbar were admitted into the Hall of the Faithful on Castamir's orders, and were given access to genealogical documents. Since neither of them were literate, however, it became necessary for Ulbar and Iriel to apprentice themselves to the loremasters of the Hall. They persuaded Parmandil the warden to accept them under the pretext that they intended to contribute a history of their people to the Hall archives.

During her period of tutelage under Parmandil, Iriel came to know Tirazôr of Belfalas (see Section 5.4.4). He was recently arrived from Lond Ernil and placed in the care of Parmandil. Because her own knowledge was further advanced than Tirazôr's, Iriel was made his tutor. Iriel perceived that (in addition to being enamored of her) the young princeling was easily manipulated by her influence, and might unwittingly be co-opted to serve the interests of the cult. Out of this observation grew a dangerous liaison.

The search for Berúthiel's progeny was unsuccessful, despite all of Iriel's and Ulbar's efforts (see Section 4.8). All of this changed, however, when Sauron's emissaries—Zimrakhil and Belphegor (see Section 2.4.2)—came to Benish Armon with an offer. The Prince of Cats accepted their terms, and Iriel found herself in the perfect position to begin the cult's new mission: to destroy all potential pretenders to the throne of Gondor before Orodreth of Morthond.

Were the Prince of Belfalas and all his male heirs to perish, Neithan would be in a position to claim through his mother the name of the most important bloodline in Gondor next to the King's own house—and Iriel enjoyed the favor of the Prince's youngest son. So it was that when the loremasters were driven from the Hall of the Faithful by Castamir, Iriel chose to return with Tirazôr to Belfalas, awaiting Tevildo's command to kill (see Section 5.6).

Although of mixed parentage, it is not difficult for Iriel to pass for a Dúnadan. Because she bears the Kuilëondo, the Prince of Cats is able to use his control of fanar to alter her natural appearance so as to fool most people of her ancestry. Iriel is tall for her mother's folk, and exceedingly comely to Dúnadan eyes. Her only patently "un-Dúnadan" features are her green eyes and brown hair.

COLFEN (1410-1450†)

Iriel's twin brother serves as the cult's enforcer. He served in Pelargir's River Squadron for seven years before being subordinated to Neithan (who became Ethir captain after the burning of Osgiliath). Colfen is one of the few non-Dúnadan officers in his service whom the Usurper trusts, and this may one day prove to be Castamir's undoing.

In addition to acting as Neithan's lieutenant in the Ethir, Colfen presides over all spiritual activity at Benish Armon in his sister's absence. Monthly blood sacrifices are made to the cats on nights of the dark moon, the victims for which are usually drawn from among the more aberrant of the Eriadoran outlaws or from Ethir-folk who resist subjugation to the cult. Colfen's dual role as naval officer and cult enforcer makes him the most powerful man in the Ethir, and few dare to cross him for fear of "disappearing" one day without a trace. Despite his proximity to Benish Armon, neither the outlaws nor the Usurper's men suspect his connection to the whispered rumors of the cult. The Ethir-folk know better, but dare not speak openly of their secret.

Colfen's many spiritual obligations often bring him as far away from Ethir Anduin as Osgiliath or even Umbar, both of which contain sizable enclaves of Ethir-folk. He can also frequently be found at Pelargir in the counsel of the Usurper. The remainder of his time is usually spent at Tarannon's villa in the Ethir, where the River Squadron is based (see Section 3.3.1).

In his capacity of Ethir lieutenant, Colfen is completely loyal to his captain, whom he holds in great personal admiration and friendship. He and Neithan have been close comrades since the latter first came to the Ethir, and

Colfen anxiously awaits the day when Orodreth can be initiated into the knowledge of his true identity and destiny. This friendship may well be one of the principal factors in the success or failure of Sauron's plan.

Unlike his sister, Colfen has the swarthy skin and black hair typical of the Ethir-folk. Like Iriel, though, he is taller than most of his people. He is heavily-set and muscular, as befits an enforcer, and has an imposing presence even in the company of the Usurper. His somewhat haunting gaze often makes people uncomfortable.

NEITHAN (1387-1450†)

Born the son of Prince Maeglin of Morthond, Orodreth took for himself the name "Neithan" (S. "the self-wronged) after murdering Eldacar's eldest son Ornendil, the deed which precipitated the burning of Osgiliath by Castamir's men. During the Usurper's reign, Neithan lives a life of self-imposed exile in the Ethir, seeking solace for the many evils which he has unwittingly brought upon his homeland. The extremity of his alienation from the ideals he once held, and his belief that an inescapable doom overshadows all of his actions, are Sauron's best hope that in time Neithan may be bent to his will.

Orodreth left the seclusion of the Morthond Vale to dwell in Osgiliath during the last years of Valacar's reign. There he became close friends with Ornendil, who had been betrothed to Mórdulin, his cousin from Belfalas. As dissension grew over the King's choice of Eldacar as his heir, Orodreth found himself sympathetic to Prince Adrazôr's view that a more suitable candidate should be chosen from among those families closest related to the King's house, and in this matter Orodreth was at variance with many in the capital (including Ornendil).

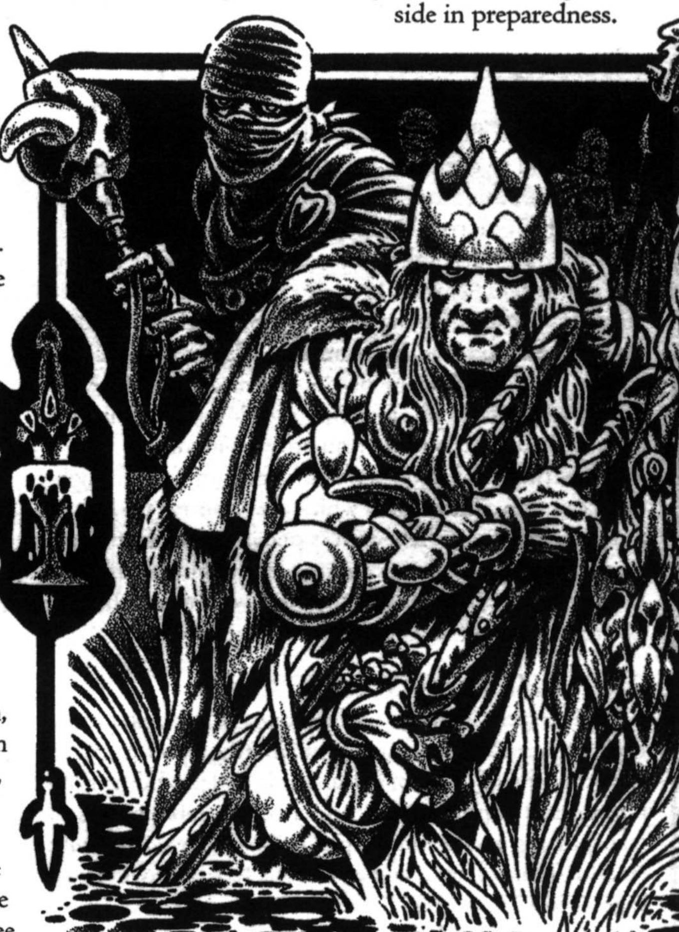
But Orodreth grew impatient with Adrazôr's neutrality, realizing that if his uncle the Prince did not take immediate and decisive action to advance one of his own sons as a candidate, the Captain of Ships in Pelargir would win the support of the people against Valacar, and civil war would follow. Orodreth's fears were confirmed when news came to him of open rebellion in Linhir. If the Prince could not restrain the people of his own fief from joining the traditionalist confederacy—and yet refuse to provide them with leadership—they would assuredly fall under Pelargir's sway. The defection of Linhir could easily lead to the erosion of the fief's practical autonomy from the Captain of Ships, unless Orodreth would dare to defy his uncle and lead the rebellion himself.

Ornendil counseled against this course of action, urging his friend to beware lest the rebels prove his own undoing. But Orodreth would not heed this warning, parting in anger from Ornendil and taking leave of Osgiliath at once to reach Linhir before Castamir's own men got there. Orodreth succeeded in persuading the rebels in Linhir to take him as their leader in the confederacy, and so foiled Calimon's bid for control (see Section 2.2.1). This deed won him a deadly rival.

Orodreth marched on Osgiliath with Castamir and the other confederate leaders, and himself led the assault that broke the defenses of the western city. Orodreth feared that the rebel captains would take undue revenge on the people of Osgiliath for their support of Eldacar, and so desired to be at the forefront of the attack in hopes of curbing any unnecessary violence. The massacre and burning that followed became terrible penance for Orodreth's exceptionally late realization of how easily his enemies were able to twist his naive desire for peace.

As compensation for playing the role of Pelargir's scapegoat, Castamir rewarded Neithan with the "ignoble" office of Ethir-captain. Neithan accepted, desiring now only to be hidden from the face of his betrayed countrymen. In the watery glades of Ethir Anduin, Neithan found some small respite from his anguish among the other outcasts of Gondor. But though consumed by grief for his wrongs, Neithan has not forgotten those responsible for his own betrayal. The flame of vengeance smolders in his heart, waiting to be ignited.

Although still young in the reckoning of the Dúnedain, Neithan appears world-weary and burdened with a heavy doom. His black hair is already greying, but his eyes are keen and his gaze penetrating. He shuns all decoration in his attire, as though in mourning. But a sword hangs at his side in preparedness.



Neithan

3.0 PELARGIR

The ancient, teeming city of Pelargir has a special role to play during the years of the Kin-strife. It was here that the sons of Elendil landed after the Akallabêth and founded the South-kingdom. Pelargir remained an important haven until the War of the Last Alliance, when it was attacked and severely damaged by Sauron's forces. The city entered a long period of stagnation from which it did not rise until late in the first millennium of the Third Age. With the ascension of the Ship-kings, notably during the short but expansive reign of King Eärnil, Pelargir was rebuilt and strengthened, becoming the great haven it has remained ever since.

Now that Osgiliath has fallen into ruin, Pelargir has become the chief port of Gondor. Should the Usurper gets his way it will also become the royal seat. At present, Pelargir is the most thriving city of the realm. Apart from being the political center for one of Gondor's most prosperous regions, the King's presence affords it many privileges. The heavy taxes that burden other provinces do not affect it—on the contrary, Pelargir is where those revenues go—and political oppression fades where there is a lack of dissidents. It is something of an irony that the people who disapprove of Castamir are a negligible minority in what is known as the City of the Faithful.

3.1 A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Lebennin is a rich province, stretching from the White Mountains to the Sea. Its fertile plain is split by many streams and rivers, the largest of which—Gilrain, Serni, Celos, Sirith, and Erui—have given Lebennin its name (S. "Land of Five Rivers"). This is one of the most densely populated regions of the realm, and is dotted with numerous villages and towns. It is also one the most civilized areas of Gondor, having been settled by the Dúnedain since the Second Age. By contrast, the mountains valleys in the northern reaches of the province have forested slopes which encircle flowering meadows. The inhabitants of these vales subsist primarily on herding.

Three thousand soldiers garrison fortifications throughout Lebennin, almost all of which are infantry (the lack of a regular cavalry in Lebennin is one of its main strategic weaknesses). With the exception of the Ethir-outlaws, the Usurper prefers to keep mercenaries away from Lebennin to prevent them from spying on its defenses.

3.1.1 THE GREAT RIVER

The Anduin is the largest and most important river in northwestern Middle-earth, contributing significantly to the economy of Gondor's heartlands and providing both a bountiful supply of fish and a comfortable means of transporting goods and people. Its banks are dotted with small fishing villages, and numerous ferries provide passage across. Important havens occupy its banks (most notably Pelargir, Harlond, and Osgiliath). Ocean-going ships may pass as far upriver as the Falls of Rauros.

The Anduin is a reasonably clean river. Silt and sediment from the far north find rest in Nen Hithoel above Rauros, while the delta of the Onodló filters out much of its own deposits. Hence, the Great River remains a clear and moderately swift stream, free of treacherous levees or mud flats above the Ethir. The river's mouth, the Ethir Anduin, is an immense delta whose geography is constantly changing on account of the many swamps, marshes, and sandy islets that occupy it.

3.1.2 TOLFALAS

Just beyond the Ethir in the Bay of Belfalas lies the volcanic isle of Tolfalas, whose steep, black cliffs and harsh, mountainous interior offer few opportunities for settlement. The island has little in the way of suitable anchorages, and its flora and fauna are sparse. Tolfalas still contains some active volcanoes and geysers, and its dangerous shoals lead most captains to avoid approaching its coasts. The island boasts of only two settlements. Nen Gilros is little more than a small fishing village. Caras Tolfalas serves as the home of the Warden, who commands a small garrison that combats the smugglers that sometimes use the isle as a rendezvous point or depot.

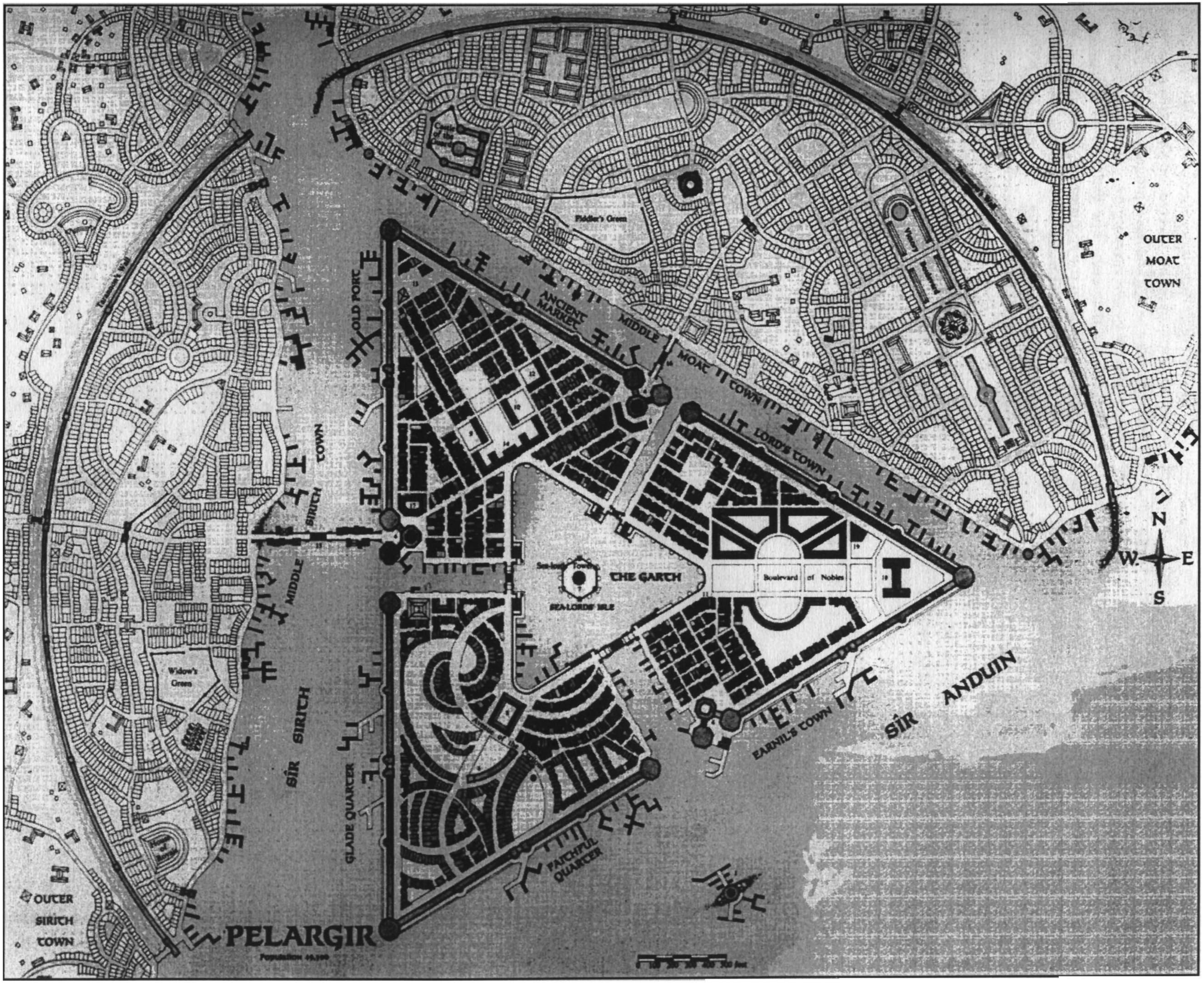
3.1.3 HYARPENDË

On the far side of the Anduin is a town called Hyarpendë, which arose as a small fishing village at some point during the early Third Age, it has since grown in stride with the neighboring city. Its livelihood centers upon the southern berth of the ferry, which crosses the river every second hour of the day. A few shops, a smithy, and the small Five Falcons inn can be found near to the berth. Some of the townsmen also support themselves on horse-trade or coach services for travelers bound for Harondor or South Ithilien. In Pelargir, Hyarpendë is sometimes referred to as the Anduin Town, though neither the authorities nor inhabitants consider it a part of the city.

3.2 THE CITY LAYOUT

Pelargir is situated at the confluence of the rivers Sirith and Anduin, some hundred and thirty miles above the Ethir. A large moat dug across its landward side has turned the Old City into an island; or, rather, three triangular islands separated by wide canals, which join to form an immense, inner harbor known as the Garth, in the center of which rises the mighty Barad Híraer (S. "Sea-lord's Tower").

The entire Old City is surrounded by a massive wall, forty feet in height and twenty in depth. This ancient, enclosed quarter serves as home to the wealthy and noble-born. Across the Sirith and beyond the moat lie the Outer Quarters (called the Sirith Town and the Moat Town respectively), where most of the commoners live and work. Surrounding both "towns" is an outer, circular wall. The glistening stone rampart was erected in the days of Eärnil.


OUTER MOAT TOWN
N
W
E
S
Victory Boulevard
Fiddler's Green
ANCIENT MARKET
MIDDLE MOAT TOWN
LORD'S TOWN
OLD PORT
MIDDLE SIRITH TOWN
Sea-lords' Tower
THE GARTH
SEA-LORDS' ISLE
Boulevard of Nobles
SÎR ANDUIN
EARNIL'S TOWN
SÎR SIRITH
GLADE QUARTER
FAITHFUL QUARTER
Widow's Green
OUTER SIRITH TOWN
PELARGIR
Population 49,390
0 100 200 300 400 500 feet

Pelargir has been growing since the era of the Ship-kings, and will continue to do so in the future. The third wall and the division of the Outer Quarters into Middle and Outer towns are still centuries ahead, but the Old City and the towns within the walls have remained largely unchanged since the tenth century of the Third Age. Settlement outside the Circular Wall is sparse and for the most part consists of small farmsteads.

3.2.1 INTERESTING LOCALITIES

1. The Spouting Whale Inn. The clientele of this well-reputed inn consists mainly of sea captains. Its rectangular, three-story construction surrounds a beautiful courtyard.

2. Pelargir Mint.

3. The Guard Barracks.

4. Barad Híraer. See Section 3.7.3. The Hall of the Faithful lies below the Sea-lord's Tower. It is currently the Côr Aran headquarters (see Sections 2.2.7 and 3.5.1).

5. The Lord's House. This huge structure now serves as the King's temporary residence.

6. The Lord's Jail.

7. The Squire's Hall. The administrative center of the city.

3.3 CITY AUTHORITIES

For all practical intents and purposes, Pelargir is the royal seat of Gondor. Osgiliath remains the formal capital of the realm, but its current state of disrepair renders it unable to fulfill that role. Castamir's retention of the lordship of Lebennin has led many to suppose (rightly) that the King intends to bring the province under direct royal control by naming Pelargir his official residence.

Castamir still resides in the Lord's House in the Old City, though he plans to have a more fitting manor built for him once he can persuade the Council of Gondor to support his plans to move the royal seat, and there are a number of rumors concerning the site for this future residence. When not in Pelargir, he resides on his family's large estates, located in the countryside some twenty miles north of the city.

3.3.1 THE ADMINISTRATION

For the last two hundred years, the administration of Pelargir has been the prerogative of the line of Calimehtar. From the time of Calimir, all positions of power have been occupied either by family members or by those under the family's patronage. The haven's informal transition to the royal seat has therefore been very smooth indeed.

The new King holds executive military power in Pelargir and Lebennin, but the tasks of day-to-day administration of the haven he has left to his sons, Castaher and Castarion, who carry out the duties of Squire and Warden respectively. In accordance with tradition, the elder son also commands the royal fleet as Lord-Captain under his father.

The court of Pelargir is presided over by five judges, the chief of whom is either elected by the citizens or appointed by the King. The lesser judges are always elected, either directly by the citizenry or indirectly by a council appointed for that task. The variables of this process depend largely upon the status of the haven vis-à-vis the King at any particular time. These appointments may be for a limited term or for life.

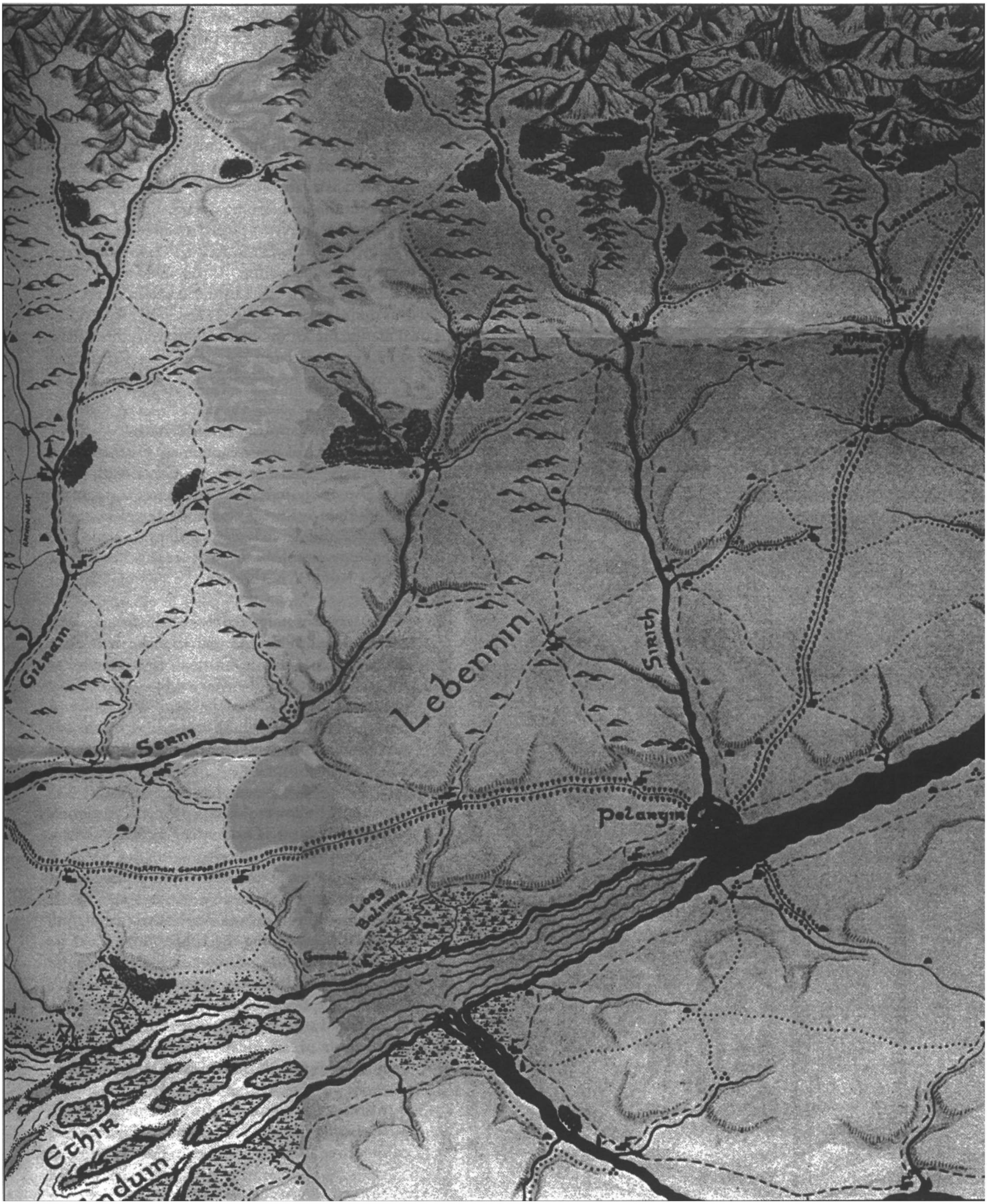
A special court, formed on market days, is comprised of one of the four lesser judges and two lay judges. The competency of the market court is restricted to minor matters of merchant or criminal law. Cases not closed before the end of the day are moved to the ordinary court, to which the verdict of the market court may be appealed.

SQUIRE OF THE HAVEN

The first duty of the Squire is to preside over the Council of Pelargir. The Squire nominally acts as a chairman, but in practice Council members serve as advisers and are ultimately accountable to his decisions. This has been especially true under Castamir, in the course of whose reign the office of Squire has itself become a mere extension of the King's will. In some instances Castaher has even adjourned meetings in order to delay a decision until he has conferred with his father. Some members have been heard muttering that the Council might as well save time and name the King as its official chairman. But while real power is thus limited, membership in the Council brings enough prestige to make it a desirable position.

Castaher has engaged his duties with some enthusiasm, though both offices include considerably more ceremonial and honorific obligations than the martially-inclined Prince is accustomed to. He has had informal discussions with his father about reforming his role as Squire, but thus far these overtures have produced only paternal reprimands.

The Prince is viewed as something of a bully by his scribes and legislators, many of whom regard him as little more than a puppet for his father's purposes. This is not quite true, but Castaher tends to run his affairs by doing what he believes his father would have done in his stead. This, of course, suits the Usurper perfectly. Castaher detests having to cope with jurists and bureaucrats whenever making decisions. He reasons that, since he has been appointed to rule the city, he need not listen to other people's opinions all the time. (After all, are not such duties are easily and best delegated to lesser officials?) Castaher resides in the Squire's Hall in the easternmost part of the Old City, though he regards himself foremost as Lord-captain of the Fleet, the duties of which concern him far more than those as Squire.


Celos
Lasgalen
Gilrain
Lebennin
Sirith
Serni
Pelargir
Rathon Gondor
Loeg Ballimur
Ethir
Anduin

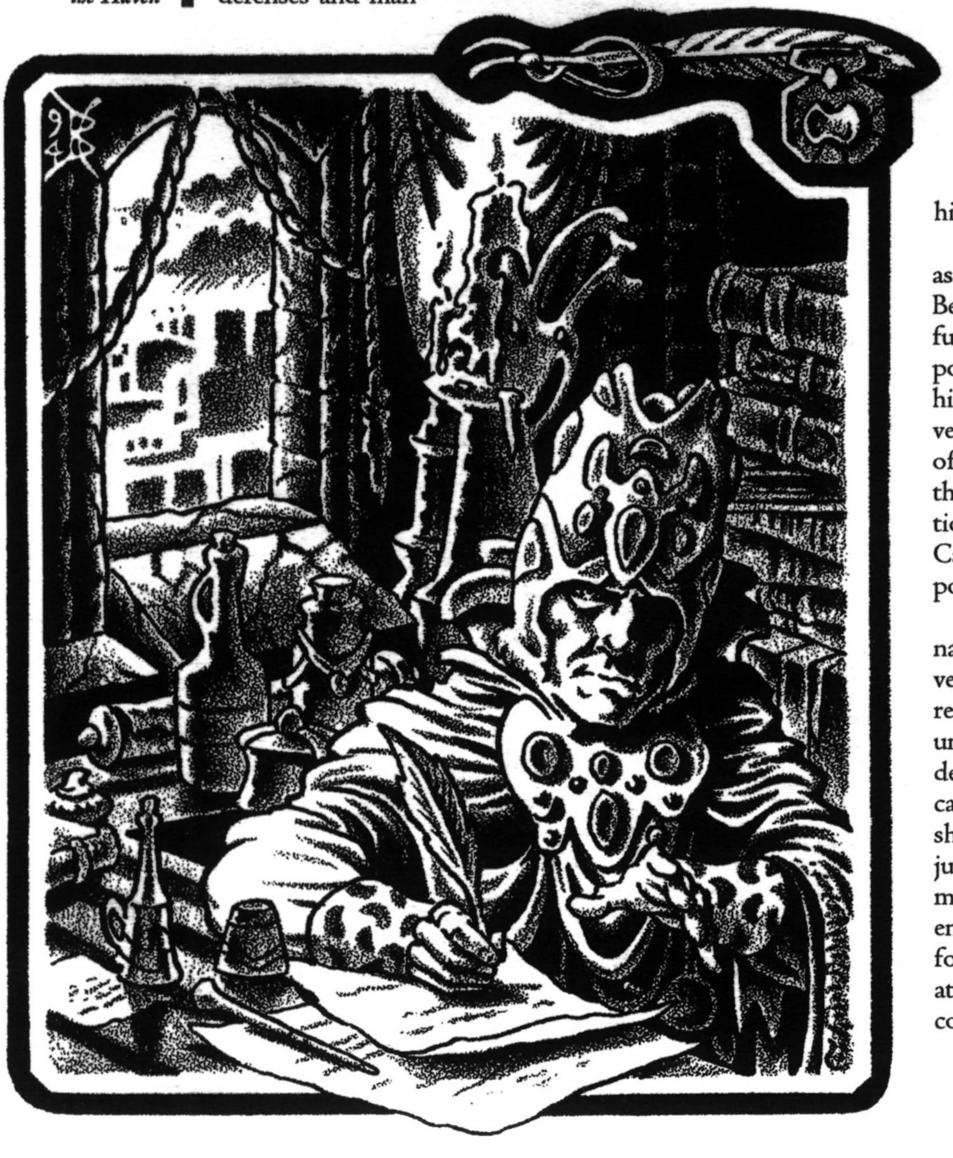
The office of Lord-captain gives the Prince military control of the haven, and he can usually be found at the docks when he does not manage to get offshore. Castaher is popular among the other naval officers, who see in him the same strength and bravery that made his father so great. Not unexpectedly, the administrators at the Hall sometimes refer to him as "The Sailor."

The first division of the Royal Fleet takes haven at Barad Híraer. The docks and quays around it also house the shipyards where warships are built, repaired and maintained. The Guard Squadron and the Warden of the River possess many small patrol vessels. Castaher has required that every ship be in top condition and ready to depart on short notice, so as to effectively meet any threat from the north (see Section 2.2.6 for more information on the fleet).

WARDEN OF THE HAVEN

Warden of the Haven

The much less exalted (but just as burdensome) post of Warden has been reserved for the Usurper's younger son Castarion, whose duties include maintaining the city defenses and managing the garrison. He is the immediate superior to the garrison officers and to the Royal Guard, but has no control over the Côr Aran.



Although his position is primarily bureaucratic in nature, Castarion is not a man to belittle his responsibilities. There are many who claim that he is too young and inexperienced for such an important office, and he strives hard to prove them wrong. Unfortunately, opportunities to exhibit his talents are few, as most of his time is spent making inspections and signing documents.

The office of Warden has placed much more attention on his person than Castarion is accustomed to, which causes him no little discomfort. As a member of the King's household, Castarion is virtually unassailable, whether he fulfills his duties or not; but he prefers to be respected on his own merits. He knows that his responsibility will be twice as heavy once Pelargir is granted capital status, and he is determined to be prepared for that day when it comes.

CAPTAIN OF THE ETHIR

The office of Ethir-captain is a creation of the Usurper from his days as Captain of Ships. Ostensibly, its responsibilities are to police the Anduin against pirates and smugglers, and to collect tolls from incoming ships. In actual fact, however, its role has been to protect the activities of a band of outlaws in the pay of Castamir himself.

These outlaws migrated to the Ethir from Eriador as the power of Pelargir began to make itself felt in Belfalas under Calimir. Castamir found them useful as strongmen and enforcers for his unofficial policies in the Bay and on the River, which allowed him to gain further wealth and power by circumventing maritime law. During the Kin-strife, the office of Ethir-captain was held by Colfen, one of the Ethir-folk in the employ of Pelargir (see Section 2.3.3). Following his usurpation of the throne, Castamir appointed Orodreth of Morthond to this position.

The immediate staff of the Ethir captain nominally consists of three commanders and fifteen vessels from the fleet, but many of these are in truth recruited from among the Ethir outlaws and are unofficially loyal to Colfen, who remains Castamir's de facto officer. In theory, the Captain of the Ethir can also take charge of the River Guard Squadron should need arise, but in principal this is under the jurisdiction of an independent squadron commander, who patrols the Sirith and the immediate environs of the Anduin about Pelargir from a fortification on the small islet in the river immediately outside the Old City (Minas Anduin). This commander also has an office in Barad Híraer.

3.3.2 THE COUNCIL OF PELARGIR

The governing body of the haven traces its traditions back to the time of Imrazôr the Númenórean, whose son Veantur founded Pelargir and instituted a council to minister to the Faithful in their daily affairs. The Council now consists of thirty-two influential men who occupy various key administrative positions in the city. In principle, its members may hold office for three-year periods, but in practice they tend to re-elect one another until a member resigns.

New members are chosen by the Council. Its members are required to be of varied backgrounds, though half of its seats are reserved for the nobility. The Council meets twice a week and enjoys authority over domestic matters (e.g., tax regulations, upkeep of streets and public buildings). It exercises no jurisdiction outside the haven.

3.3.3 THE GARRISON

Though army matters are not one of Castamir's highest priorities, he sees to it that his city is properly defended. The Kings have traditionally kept a large force stationed within the city, since Pelargir would be the first line of defense against any aggressor moving upriver from the Ethir. The garrison of Pelargir is among the finest in Gondor (even those who only seek to become common soldiers). Recruits face stringent demands, but the high population of the region ensures an unceasing supply of applicants.

The garrison of Pelargir currently numbers roughly a thousand line infantry. This force is divided into ten companies, such as the Guard Company, the Tower Company (which keep watch around the garth), the Sirith Town Company and so on, each with its own area of duty. The garrison's main duty is to uphold law and order in the city, which includes seeking out and eradicating political unrest. But since any anti-Castamir movement is automatically regarded as being pro-Eldacar (which in itself constitutes treason), there is very little unrest to be seen in Pelargir. Such tasks are typically left to the Côr Aran.

Pelargir's forces have been strengthened with a special Royal Guard (nominally a part of the traditional guard contingent for the Captain of Ships) assigned to ensure the safety of the King's person. It numbers forty-five officers and some three hundred soldiers, with a special squadron of the fleet under their direct command. This has given the regular garrison cause for both contentment (because commendable men have been given prestigious posts within the Royal Guard) and grumbling (because the Guard's decisions take precedence over those of the garrison).

As a result of Castamir's domestic policies, the garrison enjoys the effects of an enlarged budget, which has manifested itself to the common soldier in terms of new equipment, better food, and expanded numbers. It should be noted, though, that its men are fiercely loyal to the King, even without these recent improvements. Their morale is as high as any captain could ask.

A few disturbing facts darken this generally contented atmosphere. The Crows are unreasonably zealous in their search for traitors among the garrison's officers, and some good (and probably innocent) men have had to suffer for it. This has created tensions among the remaining officers, who suspect infiltrators in their own ranks. There have also been a number of strange events of late: inexplicable fires have started in administrative buildings, patrol ships in port have had their moorings slashed, and one morning two sergeants on leave were found floating face-down in the Sirith.

Some faceless foe apparently commits random terrorist acts against the authorities without announcing intentions. Loyalists have been publicly blamed for these incidents; but numerous rumors of other culprits are circulating, ranging from a crazed nobleman with strange pastimes to Orcs living in the sewers, and the officers know that they had better solve the mystery before something serious happens.

3.4 THE INHABITANTS

(POPULATION: 60,000)

3.4.1 THE ELITE

Many families who have earned noble titles come from Lebennin. Minor nobility are rather common to the province, though many houses are able to claim little more than the prestige of an ancient name and the heroic exploits of ancestors. These families often long for more tangible power and are among the Usurper's most devout followers. Lebennin also boasts of noble houses of real importance, four of which deserve special mention:

House Lintoron

House Lintoron received its title during the War of the Last Alliance, and has been closely associated with the military ever since. The Wardenship of the haven was almost traditional to the house of Lintoron until a few generations back. Heldíriel, Castarion's betrothed, hails from this dynasty.

House Alcarialë

House Alcarialë presses its origins back to the days before Akallabêth. Some doubt exists as to the validity of this claim, though no one can deny that the dynasty is very old. Its members own huge tracts of Lebennin's most fertile land along the coast and the lower Sirith. The house is noted for its very traditionalist stance.

House Míruvor

House Míruvor came to prominence sometime after the founding of Gondor (according to tradition, when the land was restored to order following Sauron's downfall). It is rather mercantile for a noble dynasty, with its own merchant fleet and substantial influence in the Merchants Guild. Several of its members also hold the rank in the Fleet.

House Serni

House Serni arrived in Pelargir with Elendil's sons, and was granted an estate in southwestern Lebennin by Isildur, whose squire Carnendil was the head of that family. The family assumed a key role in the administration of the Hall of the Faithful in 712, and has retained that role hereditarily up to the present. Their claim to fame has not left them proud and protective. They are not well-disposed to the Usurper's decision to disenfranchise them from their charge. Additionally, though they are not themselves actively loyalist, the house would prove a valuable ally for those who sympathize with Eldacar's cause.

The Manor-folk of Lebennin

Apart from a few rural landholders in the northeast, the nobles of Lebennin have given Castamir their full support from the beginning, most being either relatives or childhood friends of the Usurper, and generally share his ideals. For them, the recent war was merely a successful attempt by a rightful royal contender to expel an alien element from the throne. It is considered proper among these nobles to refer to the exiled "Northman" King by his given name of Vinitharya, thereby refusing to acknowledge Eldacar to have been a kinsman (the fact that most of the noble families can trace relations with his line is gracefully overlooked). A few individuals were, if not loyal to Eldacar, at least against the idea of someone seizing the Winged Crown by force. These saw fit to leave their homes, some as early as 1432, to journey westward or northward. There are still some noblemen in Pelargir who resent the current regime, but these latter stay quiet for their own safety.

Another factor is swiftly poisoning internal relationships among the nobility. It is widely known that Castamir intends to make Pelargir the new capital of his realm, and in the course of this a number of new grants, holdings, and offices will be made available for Lebennin nobles. All who might have an opportunity are predictably anxious to profit from the forthcoming shift in power. Being on good terms with the King is paramount, although the Usurper appreciates neither fuss nor flattery.

This leaves two other ways to rise quickly in the hierarchy. One is to cast suspicions on one's peers, a tactic which has frequently been used of late (to the frustration of Côr Aran). A tangling web of intrigue and treachery is thus being woven into the upper layers of society to the point that members of the same families distrust each other. Those skilled in theft, spying and forgery have had no difficulty in finding profitable employment these days.

The other way is to arrange (or prevent) marriages between families that may suit one's own ambitions. Such a way to gain connections would seem rather harmless if not for the fact that the Queen's own sister, Telerien, remains unwed and unbetrothed. She serves as a road straight into the royal family. Castamir is more than comfortably aware of the potential power she might offer. Others, of course, share this knowledge. Since Telerien gracefully delegates all matters of marriage to her sister, Mûrabêth must spend a considerable amount of her time handling the numerous courtiers who approach the young lady (generally for all the wrong reasons).

3.4.2 THE GUILDS

As practically all professional artisans are members, the policies of the haven's twenty-three guilds control or influence vital sources of revenue for the haven. The Usurper would find himself in quite an awkward position should these guildmasters turn against him, but at present the general sentiment is that Pelargir's artisans, and especially those involved in maritime activities, have benefited from the new King's pro-coastal policy; but any indication that his rule might bring instability on a long term basis would quickly dampen guild support. The Côr Aran is well aware of this danger, and monitors anyone within the guildhalls expressing doubts to this effect.

The Shipwrights Guild is the most powerful, since it controls all-important resources for the fleets. Without its cooperation, the King would soon find himself on loose ground indeed. The present guildmaster is an elderly man, Dírhavel, who is a stout believer in the blessings of Castamir's rule and who will continue to give his support to the end of the Usurper's reign. As long as the old man remains guildmaster, Castamir has nothing to fear from that direction.

Other important guilds include the Armorers Guild, the closely related Smiths Guild, the Scribes Guild, and of course the Merchants Guild. Many prosperous merchants back the King, as their wealth depends on continued trade with Arthedain and the South, which Castamir has consistently privileged. For the present, all of the guilds are supportive, or at least friendly, towards the Usurper.

3.4.3 THE COMMONERS

The inhabitants of Pelargir whole-heartedly support their King, and expect a bright future under his rule. They notice very little of the scheming among the nobility, and hear even less of the dissent growing in the inland provinces. This is especially true of those living in the Outer Quarters. Perhaps more people will realize how capricious the Usurper's reign really is as time passes, but at present most city dwellers are quite happy with the way things have turned out.

The quays are being strengthened, employment and economic resources are plentiful (here, if nowhere else), and the streets are almost safe to tread at night. Soon enough, people will be able to boast that they are living in the royal capital. A good life indeed! Groups plotting against their King can thus expect no sympathy from the majority of the haven's residents. Concerned citizens are in fact a far greater danger to loyalists than are the spies of competing factions.

The non-Dúnadan residents of Pelargir, for the most part descended from the Men of the White Mountains or from Southron stock, usually reside in the city's poorer quarters. The Usurper's vision of a just society blatantly discriminates against them. Soldiers of the garrison show them less respect, and courts have even given different penalties to Dúnadan and "foreign" criminals.

Most of those with the means to leave Pelargir have done so, leaving a ragged collection of less than two hundred rogues and paupers to lament their fate. The Dúnadan bias against lesser races is as widespread among the general populace as with the nobility, and most citizens would gladly be rid of this alien element within the haven. Local patriotism does the rest, and cases of "outsiders" being forced from their homes are not unheard of in the Moat Town.

3.4.4 NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

Targon (1351-1448†)

Targon is the captain of Pelargir's garrison. He declined a post in the Royal Guard, preferring more familiar duties. Although Castamir has complete trust in his abilities, Targon has lately come to blows with Castarion, who believes that the garrison could benefit from a younger commander not so fully grown into old habits. Given Castarion's position as warden, Targon feels that his post may be in danger unless he can somehow prove his worth to the King's son.

Targon is a sturdy old officer whose years of service reach back to the days of the Usurper's father. His hair is greying and his skin wrinkled, yet he shows no loss of vigor, due to his pure Dúnadan blood.

Carnendil (1377-1489)

Having lived in Pelargir all his life, few could ever suspect Carnendil of being the leader of the underground loyalist group known as the Dîn Lammen. Carnendil is naturally careful to guard this secret. Because of his loyalist involvement, he is anxious not to remind his peers of his ancestry. Genealogists are unwelcome in his house (see Section 3.5.3). Carnendil is a member of the Council and has powerful connections among the nobility, and a good supply of intelligence about Castamir and his current plans. He has carefully recruited half a dozen other influential persons to his side: his own wife, a reputable bard, two scribes from the Squire's Hall, Castarion's seer, and the Guildmaster of the Tanners.

Carnendil has not yet revealed to the other members of Dîn Lammen about his doubts concerning the validity of their methods. He suspects that his compatriots are impotent advocates of a just cause. As long as the Dîn Lammen has no way of putting their knowledge to practical use, they present no danger whatsoever to the Usurper. He longs for a practical plan of action in support of Eldacar.

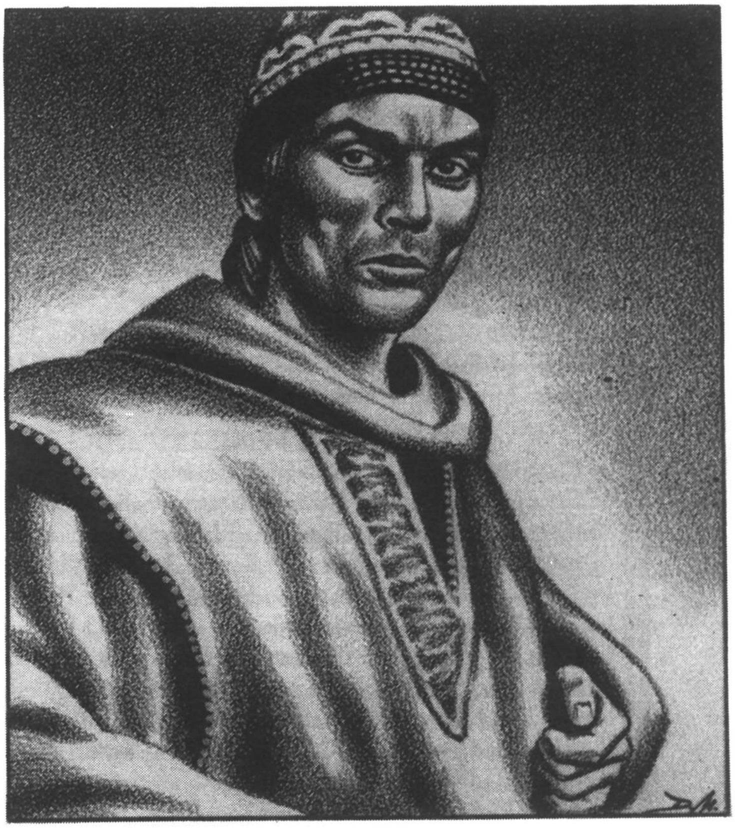
The massive support Castamir receives from the populace is also rather disheartening. Carnendil wonders whether the people of Lebennin would really bother supporting the rightful King, even if they heard what Dîn Lammen knew of the Usurper.

Despite these concerns, Carnendil is pragmatic. For the moment at least, he is content to proceed with his work, hoping that he will be able to recruit new people with fresh ideas to the group. This will not be possible for some time yet, since he has discerned that the Côr Aran are presently involved in an investigation of Council members, and fears that they may soon be on to him. On the other hand, it has given him additional insight into the Crows' methods.

Carnendil is a tall, thin man with a soft voice and a calm temperament.

Lidimir (1411-1512)

One of those to whom Castamir's usurpation is distressing is Lidimir, who has gone so far as to support one of Pelargir's fledgling loyalist groups. Lidimir's wealth depended on his connections with "colleagues" in Osgiliath, and the last four years have seen this profitable enterprise degenerate. Now he finds himself as little more than a fence for the local miscreants. He retains an impressive inventory of illegal wares, as well as rather useful acquaintances and a wealth of knowledge of which no common thief could boast.



Carnendil

Lidimir is a short and athletic man with brown hair and brown eyes. His face sports some scars from dagger fights in his youths. He used to dress rather well, though nowadays, when business is bad, his clothes have a worn look. He is a suave man, though beneath that surface he is completely without scruples.

TÁRAIN (1387-1486)

The mysterious, unchallenged chief among Pelargir's criminal elements has held his position for nearly thirty years. Tárain is a greedy, unscrupulous individual who has always nurtured dreams of wealth and power. His work as an accountant and scribe took him through numerous unimportant assignments over the decades, and his dreams remained mere dreams through the better part of his life.

After being appointed book-keeper for the harbor tolls, he soon realized that he had access to information that could be put to personal use. Tárain used a small staff of hired bullies to take control of the smuggling trade a few years afterwards. Any smuggling activities outside of his ring could be swiftly spotted by examining the local warehouses and the revenues of local traders, and comparing them with his official lists. His alias was born out of the strict and business-like manner in which his affairs are run. In stark contrast to most other crime lords, the Straight Man never goes back on his word.

Tárain is not very sociable, and his grumpiness and lack of humor does nothing to make him popular among his scrivener associates. This is partially quite deliberate, since being lonely is a necessity if his double life is to remain undetected. He works in a small office just by the bridge in Sirith Town, where he handles bookkeeping on river tolls and makes monthly reports on harbor usage to the Council of Pelargir. This job gives him first-rate information about practically everything concerning the docks. As the "Straight Man," Tárain employs a group of rogues who act as his middlemen and enforce his orders, though nobody would suspect a man in his simple position to wield such power.

Tárain is a small and slightly near-sighted man past his middle-age. His hair is grey and the eyes are greenish. He is dressed in a simple and anonymous fashion.

THORONDIL (1411-1523)

Thorondil is a Pelargir-born officer who was stripped of his rank and expelled from the army following the confederate victory in Osgiliath. Having served as an officer to King Valacar for several years, he had fallen in love with a Northman lass who belonged to the King's household staff. Their romance was interrupted by the ensuing Kin-strife, and the fate of Thorondil's beloved remains unknown to him. Thorondil himself barely escaped charges of treason in the general turmoil following the siege and burning of Osgiliath, and his loyalties are wholeheartedly given over to Eldacar. Thorondil is motivated by lust for revenge against those who crushed his career and his love. He wants to hurt the Usurper. Badly!

Thorondil is privately concerned about the future of the "Horrid Scum," another loyalist group. The Scum have proven their abilities time and again, but cannot be truly effective as a force for resistance so long as their actions lack direction. Should this situation continue, Thorondil can hope to achieve little more than meaningless strikes against lesser targets. He also fears that the Crows eventually catch up with them. Accordingly, his immediate problem lies in avoiding detection by the Côr Aran. Recent operations have been successful, but all have ended with the Scum escaping by the skin of their teeth. Thorondil has many decades of experience with flash inspections and clandestine supervisors from the army, and feels in his bones that Horrid Scum are being watched. (They are, in fact, being observed by one of their own, a young man named Sinyadal, who has thus far escaped Thorondil's suspicions.)

The informal leader of the Horrid Scum loyalists is a huge man, standing over seven feet and possessed of broad shoulders. His hair is black and his eyes brown. Thorondil has an impressive set of battle-scars on his body, some of them rather ugly. He counts himself lucky that none of them are in his face. Although dressed as a laborer, Thorondil carries himself with a calm confidence born out of his long experience of commanding others. The difference between him and the miserly Bergil, the Horrid Scum's founder, could not be more striking.

CELEBRIEL (1392-1441†)

The widow of a prominent merchant on the inland trade routes between Umbar and the Raj, Celebriel's husband perished in a sandstorm the previous year. Some Bozishnarod from the caravan risked their own lives to retrieve his body, and in gratitude his widow volunteered to go north as a spy for the Raj (see Section 3.5.5).

Celebriel is a newcomer to Pelargir, but is somewhat familiar with the city from earlier visits. She has renewed her acquaintances with those merchants of the haven already known to her, and is not lacking in funds to support herself. Posing as a distraught widow who left home with bitter memories has been persuasive (and is true enough in any case). The wealthy merchant wives who pay her their condolences have proved inexhaustible sources of gossip concerning the high and mighty in Lebennin, and already she has learned far more about those muddled intrigues than she deems comfortable.

Celebriel is a small woman blessed with an athletic body. Her brown hair is cut short and her eyes are blue. She is dressed in an affluent though practical way. Her demeanor is quiet and careful.

DÓRMIR (1377-1448†)

Dórmir is a loremaster. He possesses considerable knowledge about the stars and the weather, winning him the trust of the squadron commander of the River Guard at Pelargir (see Section 3.3.1). Those who have sought out his advice include some prominent nobles, as well as the

Queen herself upon occasion. He aims to win election to the Council of Pelargir within a few years. Dórmir is secretly a servant of Adûnaphel (see Section 3.5.6).

Dórmir is a Dúnadan man of medium height and build. His eyes are grey and the hair is brown mixed with gray. He is dressed as a scholar, though preferably in black and brown. His manner are suave, hiding what is on his mind.

HÍRIEL (1379-1448†)

Having set herself up as a matchmaker for the court circles of the nobility, Híriel has acquired much knowledge about the various noble houses of the haven. She understands their respective dispositions toward one another and towards the King. Her goal is to seduce a suitably influential noble. Híriel is secretly a servant of Adûnaphel (see Section 3.5.6).

Híriel is a beautiful Dúnadan woman of middle age. Her eyes are brown and the hair has a henna-colored reddish hue. She is well-dressed in the latest fashion and knows how to behave in the high and medium circles of the city. However, she is quite haughty to anyone considered much below her station.

CARNION (1405-1448†)

Having been recruited into the Côr Aran, Carnion has earned Caramir's respect for his skills in stealth and subterfuge, but remains a common field agent without rank and so is not privy to the existence of the second "nest" in Pelargir (see Section 3.5.1). Carnion is secretly a servant of Adûnaphel (see Section 3.5.6).

Carnion is of medium height and build, with brown hair and eyes. He is neatly though inconspicuously dressed. His manners are flexible and adapted to whatever circumstance he is facing.

3.5 CLANDESTINE GROUPS

3.5.1 THE CÔR ARAN

The King's Circle, the Côr Aran, serves as Castamir's secret police. Naturally, it maintains its central administrative staff in Pelargir. The unit boasts of some ninety full-time spies, who the people refer to as "Crows." In addition to the normal structure of the organization, there is a secret cell whose existence is known only to its own members, who are recruited in part from the other cells. Caramir deploys the Côr Aran from his commandeered base of operations in Pelargir: the Hall of the Faithful. (It is known in infamy as "the Nest".)

The Hall of the Faithful is arguably the oldest building in Pelargir, being raised by the son of Imrazôr the Númenórean at the foundation of the haven in the year 2350 of the Second Age. It was constructed as a vast repository for the treasures and lore of ancient Westernesse, and was built downward into the solid rock upon which the haven rests, making it the most secure fastness in Pelargir. Since the forced evacuation of its personnel at Castamir's orders, it has offered an ideal (and sound-proof) headquarters and archive for Caramir's organization.

Because of its antiquity and revered character, many in Pelargir consider the King's action an outrage and a violation of its symbolic value as a place of justice and honor for the people of Lebennin. Unanimous pressure from the nobles has forced the Usurper to compromise by continuing to allow the Council of Pelargir to meet on its premises, while forbidding access to the lower halls where the Côr Aran has its offices.

In addition to this restriction, the regular offices of the Council have been relocated to the Squire's Hall. It is an imperfect compromise, and many influential members of the Council find Caramir's stark nonchalance towards the ban against weapons inside the Hall even more appalling, but since Castaher has no objections towards the Crows' presence, there is little else Council members can do.

What none of the Council know is that there is a second nest in the city, known only to Caramir himself and to members of the secret cell. It is located in the basement of a large and disreputable inn called the Frothing Hog. The single planning room in the basement has all the grimy looks of a Gort den.

The inn is a mere stone's throw away from the barracks of the Guard Company. Rumor has it that the innkeeper's beautiful daughter Culwen is Caramir's mistress. This accounts for Caramir's frequent presence at the inn. Actually, both Culwen and her father are two of cell's most able members, and the innkeeper's daughter encourages the rumors about her trysts in order to shroud her master's true purpose. No written documents are kept here. Occasional messages to and from agents are stored inside Culwen's blouse.

Several factors played a role in Castamir's selection of a site for the Côr Aran's headquarters. Because he contemplated the permanent removal of the royal seat to Pelargir, it would have to be located somewhere within the walls of that haven. The Hall of the Faithful was clearly the ideal candidate; its unique construction made it an impenetrable fortress, while its previous capacity as a repository of lore lent itself to the Usurper's primary need—a vast archive in which to store all information vital to the security of his reign.

3.5.2 ORGANIZED CRIME

Smuggling, swindles, and dishonest bargains usually flourish whenever shifts in power occur, and the present situation in Gondor is no exception. A good part of these criminal activities take place in the Outer Quarters of the city, especially in the harbors. Too many transactions are made for anyone to monitor, and people can disappear swiftly and unnoticed if something goes wrong. Often enough, shady trades are plied by ordinary citizens who have found a chance to make a quick profit, but similar operations are also handled on a larger scale by people who work in a much more business-like manner.

Dissidents who seek to thwart the current regime but find themselves opposed by the citizenry may actually find allies among this dubious bunch. Many local crime lords have had reason to resent Castamir ever since the days of his captaincy, during which time he spared few expenses to rid the region of villains (except for those in his own employ).

The Straight Man

There is one person in Pelargir whose authority in underworld matters is unquestioned. He is called "the Straight Man" and controls most of the organized smuggling in the city. The men of the Harbor Guard refer to this organization as the "Smugglers Guild." Their jestful term is fairly near the truth, for the Straight Man runs his affairs in much the same manner as such respectable institutions.

Smuggler gangs who pay tribute to him are guaranteed a fair price among Pelargir's fences, and receive protection against overly zealous guardsmen and blackmailers. Cargo handlers, look-outs, and personnel for creating diversions can be hired from him, and many use the Straight Man as a go-between for bribes. Smugglers who operate without his consent are usually found floating in the Sirith.

The Straight Man's identity is one of the best kept secrets in Pelargir, and is known by less than ten people. The garrison has listed a number of suspected merchants, ship captains, and even a few nobles, but their efforts to catch him have failed, since he is somebody else (see Tárain, Section 3.4.4). His power is both extensive and strong in Pelargir, running through many layers of society, and may soon reach as far as Minas Anor (see Section 7.5.1). Only last year, the garrison exposed a large group in the Shipwrights Guild who took bribes from the Straight Man to install special smuggling compartments in their vessels. Accordingly, the Straight Man found other, more secure channels for his operations with the Ethir outlaws, who are led by a pirate named Lannaigh (see Section 3.5.4).

The Straight Man first learned of Castamir's patronage of Lannaigh's outlaws through one of his bureaucratic contacts in Pelargir, and established contact with them through a smuggler with who owed him a favor. He threatened Lannaigh with public disclosure of his relationship to the Usurper which, if word got out, would surely terminate that relationship for reasons of political propriety. In return for keeping the secret, the Ethir outlaws would agree to assist Pelargir's smugglers in getting their contraband past the mouths of the Anduin.

3.5.3 LOYALIST GROUPS

Residents of Pelargir consider it their duty to report any rumor of subversive activities to the authorities. Consequently, the few loyalists present in Pelargir must rely solely on their own resources, and must work and organize themselves in absolute secrecy. There are currently two loyalist groups in the city, each unaware of the other's existence.

Dîn Lammen

The smaller group is called Dîn Lammen (S. Silent Voice) and was founded by Carnendil, a minor noble whose grandmother was a landholder of mixed heritage from Harondor. This taint in his bloodline is not usually remembered these days (black hair and brown eyes are common enough among the Dúnedain, and his skin is not much darker than usual), but is enough to make him feel that the Usurper's reasons for starting the Kin-strife were pure nonsense.

The members of the Dîn Lammen strive to gather evidence of Castamir's misrule and the ill-effects of his policies upon the realm. They have acquired a wealth of detailed, incriminating facts but have only a vague idea of what to do with their knowledge. The Dîn Lammen's problem is that the members are not men of action and enjoy no contact with Eldacar, so they are unable to put what they know to much practical use. They hold meetings twice a month in Carnendil's manor in the Faithful Quarter.

The Horrid Scum

The second loyalist group in Pelargir proudly derives its name from a public speech given by Castamir, which reviled them as *"the horrid scum that seek to aid the Northmen and stir trouble within our noble kingdom."* The Horrid Scum were originally founded by Bergil, a miserly cloth-merchant who went out of business when his contractors in Osgiliath perished at the hands of the confederates. He has since made contact with others whose careers or lives have been disrupted by the Kin-strife, most of whom are simple commoners. Bergil himself does not lead the activities of the Scum, but has delegated this responsibility to Thorondil (see Section 3.4.4).

A score of able-bodied men and women fill the ranks of the Horrid Scum, but the group's effectiveness is hampered by a lack of information regarding the activity and movements of its principal antagonists. The Scum have been able to take steps toward overcoming this handicap through the assistance of Lidimir, an illicit power-broker in Pelargir who has provided them with weaponry, temporary hide-outs, and tips on when and where to strike. Because Lidimir is most familiar with the City Guard and its facilities, the operations of the Scum have been thus far primarily directed against the garrison and its apparatus of military control in the haven. The recent terrorist actions which have confounded the Guard are their handiwork (see Section 3.3.3).

The Horrid Scum never gather in their full numbers; instead, a few coordinators meet on a weekly basis to discuss their "business," frequently switching meeting places in order to prevent discovery by the Côr Aran. But these precautions have have so far failed, for the group was unknowingly infiltrated two months ago by a self-righteous youngster named Sinyadal. By pure chance, Sinyadal discovered the existence of the Scum and managed to join their ranks in order to make his fortune as an informant for the Crows. The young urchin was swiftly recruited after Caramir learnt of his attempts to report the loyalists to the unbelieving garrison. Unfortunately for the Côr Aran, Sinyadal has been given few opportunities to learn anything important about the Scum as of yet, since he is usually sent to run errands whenever a meeting is held.

3.5.4 THE ETHIR OUTLAWS

While not based in Pelargir, the outlaws that infest the mouths of the Anduin are to a large extent under the control of the King. This band of Eriadoran pirates originally held the Gwathló stronghold of Sudúri, until they were driven out by the Western Division of Castamir's fleet that patrolled the river between Tharbad and the sea. Scattered for a time, the survivors regrouped along the uninhabited coast of Andrast, taking advantage of the civil strife in Gondor to establish themselves in the Ethir in the year 1435.

But the outlaws soon fell to fighting among themselves, a power struggle which led to a split between Lannaigh, the most powerful of the pirates, and a dissenting captain, Rastarin, who withdrew with her followers to Umbar. This weakened their numbers somewhat, but not enough to neutralize the threat they posed to the native inhabitants of the Ethir. From their base in the small haven of Fanuilond, Lannaigh and his outlaws sought to drive the Ethir-folk away from their newly claimed hunting grounds.

The Ethir-folk appealed to the Captain of Ships in Pelargir for assistance, and Castamir sent a naval squadron to deal with the problem. His solution, however, was not to drive out Lannaigh's outlaws, but to subdue them and compel them to serve the Captain of Ships in exchange for their continued freedom in the Ethir (provided they gave peace to the Ethir-folk). To this Lannaigh assented, knowing from experience that alliance (albeit informal) with legitimate authority is always preferable to open opposition, even when it entails limits to one's own illicit aspirations.

Castamir made use of the outlaws during the remainder of the war, sending them to harass the coasts of Anfalas, where resistance to the confederates was considerable. He also empowered them (unofficially, of course) to raid the ships of Belfalas, in the hopes of further weakening Adrazôr's position on the sea. With the conclusion of the Kin-strife, widespread complaints about Lannaigh's depredations led the Usurper to offer mock placation through the creation of a naval outpost in the Ethir to contain the pirates.

Under the table, however, Castamir made it clear to his liaison officer, Colfen (see Section 2.3.3), that the outlaws were not to be hindered, unless they were caught in an overt act of lawlessness; but even then, in most cases, the King's justice would see to it that none of Lannaigh's men remained long in the Pelargir jail. Neithan, the current commanding officer of this naval unit, finds it difficult to comply with the King's unspoken rules, and constantly seeks indirect ways of making trouble for the outlaws (see Section 3.3.1).

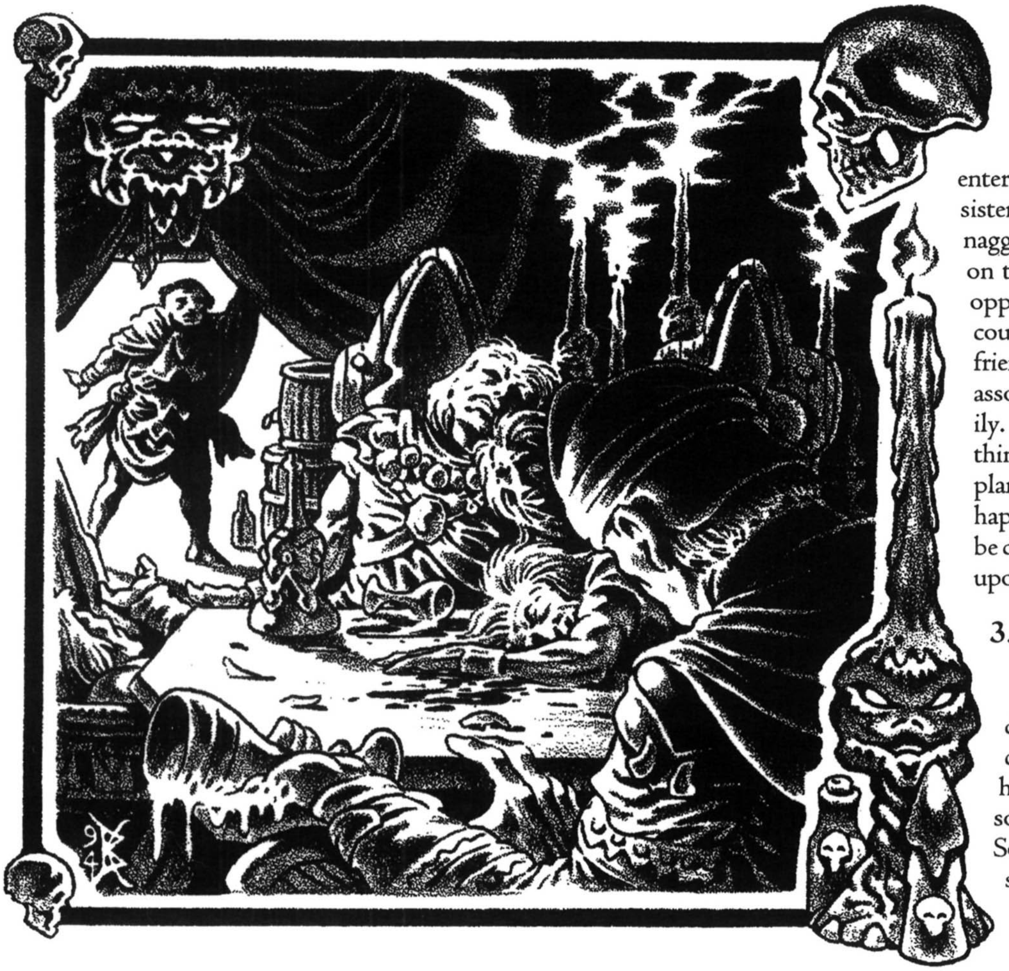
Most of the outlaws' piratical activities are focused on the western coasts of Belfalas Bay, though the coastal region of Harondor also falls within their range. So long as Lannaigh's outlaws do his bidding when called upon and their raiding does not become endemic, the Usurper is ready to look the other way. Recently, however, Lannaigh has been expanding his operation to include smuggling, an activity which would lead to conflict with the King if he learned of it (see Section 3.5.2). The Ethir outlaws have also been employed by Lord Morlaen, the King's uncle, for transporting unofficial contributions to Lord-captain Menelmir's cause in Umbar (see Section 4.6).

Lannaigh has made the fortified village of Fanuilond his base of operations. The first victim of the outlaws' raiding, Fanuilond had been the administrative center for the district of Lebennivet. Instead of rebuilding it, however, the Usurper left it abandoned and desolate, moving the district offices to the neighboring town of Linhir (now under his political control). Lannaigh and his pirates have many temporary havens in the Ethir, but Fanuilond remains their headquarters and principal stronghold (see Section 5.8.3).

3.5.5 A SPY FOR THE RAJ

An abrupt halt to southward sea-traffic from Umbar signaled to the rulers of Bozisha-Dar that civil war was imminent in Gondor, a cause for no small alarm. Things eventually seemed to calm down around 1439, but the once lucrative trade with the north has not yet returned to its pre-war levels. Influential powers in the Raj are becoming ever more insistent that something be done to rectify this situation.

Envoys reached Umbar more than a year ago, but they were soon to discover that a Southron could ask very little about Gondorian politics before people stopped giving answers. Even worse, from what they could gather the Usurper may be entertaining thoughts of incorporating the Raj into the realm of Gondor. Rumors leaking from authorities in Umbar even intimated possible military action on Castamir's part. Under such circumstances, the envoys could not feel certain of their own safety, as a growing racist sentiment was evident; what if Pelargir had become a dangerous place for dark-skinned folk to visit? Instead of attempting to make direct contact, the men of Raj use Dúnedain from Umbar to spy for them, the first of which to arrive in Pelargir is a widow named Celebriel (see Section 3.4.4).



Servant finds poisoned suitors

3.5.6 SERVANTS OF THE ENEMY

Adûnaphel has placed three spies in Pelargir, who maintain contact with Lugarlûr through one of the Ethir outlaws. They have three objectives: (1) to generate tension within the government of the haven through political influence, (2) to gather information about the King, and (3) to deflect any potential threats against the Usurper's life. These spies are, in fact, a family—a father (Dórmir), a mother (Híriel), and a son (Carnion)—who were sent to Pelargir in 1438, just six months following Castamir's usurpation of the crown.

Dórmir reports to Adûnaphel concerning the family's activities through a contact in the Ethir on every full moon. This agent is Amrukh, a swarthy Haradan captain of the boat called "The Shadow Dancer." Amrukh is bent to the service of Lugarlûr through suspension of a warrant for his arrest in Umbar and Pelargir (see Section 5.8.2).

Akhôrahil will soon have his own agent in Pelargir—a Black Númenórean named Morsûl, who belongs to the Order of the Southern Dragon. His objectives are (1) to make contact with and gain the confidence of Celebriel, who spies in Pelargir for the Raj (see sections 3.4.4 and 3.5.5), (2) to kill her if she presents a threat, and (3) to block re-establishment of trade between Gondor and the south. Celebriel knows of Morsûl's coming, but believes him to be in the service of the Raj.

3.6 ADVENTURE: CANDLE BURNING, BURNING BRIGHT

Queen Mûrabêth has grown weary of entertaining noblemen with aspirations for her sister Telerien's hand. Even worse are their nagging mothers, incessantly trying to speak on the young men's behalf at every available opportunity. The Queen knows that their courting has nothing to do with love or even friendliness. They are merely seeking the power associated with marriage into the royal family. Mûrabêth decided long ago that something would have to be done about it. Her plan was simple: were something terrible to happen to some of the suitors, others would be discouraged from making further advances upon Telerien.

3.6.1 A TALE OF DEATH AND DEVOTION

After hearing of the Queen's complaints during a recent visit to Pelargir, Castamir's cousin, Alandur, presented to Mûrabêth his friend Khoradûr, a prominent though somewhat repulsive merchant from the South. Alandur hinted that the man was skilled in the use of poisons and, after some prodding, the Southron offered Mûrabêth a gruesome recipe in exchange for relief from city tolls (an easily arranged matter for the Queen). Khoradûr was later invited to stay as her guest in the Lord's House in order to await the proper opportunity.

Three weeks passed without event. Then, during one of her stays in the city, Telerien decided to arrange an informal dinner for six of her favorite suitors. The evening came and dinner passed smoothly; the young men seemed to get on well with each other, and Telerien enjoyed herself thoroughly. The suitors stayed on after Telerien excused herself later in the evening, and retired to a sitting-room in order to converse in private over a few samples from the Lord's wine cellar, asking not to be disturbed.

One of them, a man named Hirluin, left very early after a short dispute with one of the others. Later on, a manservant in the adjoining library heard the remaining five complain about the sour flavor of the wine. They eventually quieted down, but did not leave when the late evening passed into night. The servants assumed the young men could find their own way out and went to bed. The suitors were found early the next morning, still seated in the same armchairs—all of them limp, motionless, and apparently blind, deaf and numb to everything around them. Two of them turned out to be dead, though it was some time before the servants could determine which were still alive and which were not. It was a grisly sight.

Khoradûr had prepared a special paste from Klytun root—an exotic poison found among the distant Brij-Mijesec of the Raj known to induce catatonia—which he mixed with wax and molded into candles, twelve of which were put in the room where Khoradûr knew the suitors would be sitting. He has a few unused candles left, stashed in his coffers. The five men had the candles lit when they entered the room, thus releasing the poison into the air.

The effect of inhalation was slight at first, inducing little more than depressed moods and a slight nausea (which was blamed on the wine). Hirluin was not exposed long enough to suffer any ill effects, but as the candles continued to burn, the concentration of poison in the air increased and began to cause apathy and finally catatonia. The suitors had been inhaling ever stronger doses of the Klytun poison for more than two hours before the candles were spent, and their nervous systems had by then taken enough damage to make its effect irreversible. Two of them were not strong enough to survive the fumes which, being heavier than air, slowly settled and condensed on all exposed surfaces in the room, causing the nauseous effect to linger.

There was some general hysteria in the manor at first, but it soon gave way to a nervous watchfulness as people began to wonder what really happened. It is at this point that characters arrive upon the scene.

3.6.2 THE NPCS

Telerien (1415-1592)

The young Telerien is too inexperienced to understand such cruel intrigue, and is even quite fond of some of the young men. Sending her to live on the family estates in the Lebennin countryside has had little effect, since she continues to invite them to visit her there. As the younger sister of the Queen, Telerien alone of the King's house holds no aspiration to power, although her unmarried status makes her a great prize for any who seek a way into the royal family. While she is well-liked among court circles, she seldom finds such company engaging and so does not often participate in public functions.

Telerien is a short, slim, and very beautiful woman with dark hair and blue eyes. She always tries to behave as befits a member of the royal family. Her dressing is luxurious and fashionable.

Khoradûr (1395-1441)

The merchant is from Umbar, where he has made a career in illicit trade with the South, from which his extensive knowledge of poison derives. Khoradûr is greedy, ruthless and devoid of all morals (a fact which becomes evident to all who interact with him). The servants in the Lord's House are surprised that the Queen will entertain such a figure, and the Royal Guard are thinking of finding an excuse to arrest him before the King returns home.

Khoradûr is nearly seven feet tall, with broad shoulders and long, wiry arms which reveal broad scars. A thick, drooping mustache betrays his less than Dúnadan origins, though his peculiar repugnance stems more from his behavior than from his appearance.

Hirluin (1398-1612)

Hirluin is a Pelargir-born member of House Alcarialë. He is little more than a spoiled child whose ambition for Telerien's hand is directed by his parents. The young man's eyes are opened to the court intrigues in brutal fashion when suspicions of murder are cast on him. He soon finds all of his friends turning against him. Even members of his own family turn their backs in fear of being too closely associated with a suspected criminal. He sends messages to Telerien to plead with her to help him, but never receives a reply. Prior to the third day, even she is not certain of his innocence.

Hirluin is normally a rather attractive young fellow. He is tall and athletic, with bright blue eyes, blond hair and a charming smile. Unfortunately, the present distress is evident on his appearance. He is dressed as befits a scion of a high noble house, preferring a somewhat martial style. He is polite and well-mannered, though always conscious of his station and expecting deference from those below him.

3.6.3 THE SETTINGS

The Lord's House is a vast manor overlooking one of the three angles of the Garth. Its granite and marble structure contains several hundred rooms connected by long, winding corridors. At its center is an enclosed courtyard with a magnificent garden and fountains, which are renown throughout the realm.

The splendor and luxury of this environment should be stressed to the players. Its layouts are not of importance to the adventure, so the building is not described here in any detail. Note that the second floor is reserved for the private apartments of the King's household, and the Royal Guard will not allow the characters to enter it unless they have official permission or happen to be close friends with the family. In any case, all important events in this adventure take place on the lower floors. (See Section 3.2.1 for more information.)

3.6.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to solve the mystery of the suitors' death. Mûrabêth's involvement in the murder plot makes this task politically sensitive, since any attempt to implicate the Queen would land the player-characters in serious trouble. In truth, once having learned the identity of the assassin, the real challenge of the adventure lies in fabricating a plausible explanation for the events, and in finding a suitable scapegoat. Because the adventure is initially set in the Lord's House in Pelargir, it is advisable that participating characters be of noble birth, or have influential contacts which would give them access to the royal family.

Starting the Characters

The player characters may be approached to shed light on the mysterious happenings of the previous evening, though the best dramatic effect is more easily achieved if the characters are present when the suitors are found, and see the awful scene with their own eyes (which ought to be enough to arouse their curiosity). However they are brought into the adventure, they should be made to realize the extent of the potential scandal and the need for discretion in investigating it.

Aids

There are a few clues that may aid investigators in determining the method of the murder. Some wine left in the suitors' bottles can be tested (or drunk) to show that there is nothing wrong with it. All open surfaces in both rooms are somewhat clammy and sticky to the touch, such that whatever caused it must necessarily have been gaseous. Several of the shocked servants may tell of an eerie feeling, describing the very air in the room as "sick and greasy." Indeed, every object in the room feels clammy to the touch, as if some great foulness had entered the chamber and defiled everything in it with its presence.

Numerous lit candles were the only apparent source of light in both rooms. The remaining candles can be found in Khoradûr's coffers. They are bluish and a little granular, so that an inspection of them would quickly reveal that they were not made from ordinary candle wax. Traces of the same bluish wax can be found in the bottom of the candlesticks in both rooms.

If questioned, several guards remember having seen Khoradûr in the hallway outside the sitting-room on the evening of Telerien's dinner, but he was at the docks during the latter part of the evening (when the candles were already in place). The only thing the suitors brought with them to the room was the wine. It is unlikely that Hirluin could have had an opportunity to distribute a poison through any other medium. Telerien was never near the sitting-room.

Obstacles

As with any mystery, certain obstacles conceal the path of the clues. The sticks with the burnt-down candles are still in place, but they are not very noticeable in rooms full of furniture and other objects. The fact that the true culprit will be unable to speak after the fourth day is another drawback (see Section 3.6.5). The Royal Guard and the Crows dislike having outsiders meddling with their investigation and would gleefully remove evidence from the scene if they could only discover some of it themselves.

Sensitivity is also an issue. It is certainly important to free Telerien from suspicions of sorcery, but if Khoradûr can be indicated as the delinquent, the connection between him and the Queen will only make matters worse. No blame must fall on Mûrabêth, as Caramir will personally make clear to any investigators. They may make up whatever motive they like for Khoradûr's part, but the Crows will show no remorse if they try to involve Mûrabêth in the scandal. The Côr Aran will invent an economic connection between Khoradûr and one of the suitors in order to explain the poisoning, deducing that the Southron tried to commit suicide.

Outcomes

Characters who solve the case without any suspicions being cast on the Queen or her sister can expect rich reward from the royal family. A manor in the country is one option, but unsuitable if the characters are not subjects of Gondor. In the latter event, a ship could be more suited to their needs. Ideally, the gamemaster should think of a personalized reward for each character, keeping in mind that the royal family can afford quite exorbitant remunerations.

An unsolved mystery will probably only bring thanks from Castarion for the assistance. Should the characters publicly implicate the Queen (thereby telling the truth, while showing a monumental disregard to diplomacy and common sense), they would do well to forget rewards and realize that they are in serious trouble.

Ideally, the entire affair should be officially disregarded as a regrettable incident caused by an unscrupulous Southron. The royal family will probably not suffer much from it (Castamir's repute is unblemished under any circumstances) but it might cast a sour mood among the nobility, already sufficiently paranoid. Whatever happens, certain persons may risk approaching involved characters in order to learn more.

The Dîn Lammen will be very interested in learning what really occurred and who was involved. Dórmir and his family will want to assure themselves that the Usurper will not be in danger when he returns to Pelargir. If Celebriel hears that a Southron was involved, she will want to know whether it will affect her Bozishnarod friends. The characters could gain several valuable (or dangerous) new compatriots as a result.

3.6.5 ENCOUNTERS

Talking to Mûrabêth

The Queen may grant an audience to characters during the first two days. Otherwise, her time will be occupied by her mission to stave off suitors desiring to offer her sister solace. Should Mûrabêth receive the adventurers, she will invariably react with shock when confronted with any disturbing or dangerous news. She will inevitably have very little to tell anyone. After all, the dinner was her sister's idea from the start. Mûrabêth had nothing to do with it.

For her own amusement, Mûrabêth might launch a private theory that Vinitharya's machinations are responsible (perhaps he has dealings with Dol Guldur, and has sent servants to work some necromancy for him). If asked about Khoradûr, she will claim he is a friend of the family. The Queen will refuse to speak to characters from the fifth day on.

Talking to Telerien

Telerien will be devastated when she hears what has happened. Her grief is well founded. One of the dead men was Valadan, a minor noble whom she was beginning to feel genuinely attracted to. She is certain that he courted her out of sincere affection, as he had very few influential relatives and thus had far less to gain by a marriage with her than had the others. The young woman sits weeping in a secluded corner of the courtyard for most of the afternoon.

The young woman is not very communicative during the first two days of the investigation. She is stricken with grief and has nothing to tell, apart from the fact that her suitors were fine when she left them. After the fifth day she will brighten up somewhat and may even ask characters to help her once she hears of the rumors about her. She will of course say nothing of her night with Khoradûr, and claims that his fate is a mystery to her. If confronted with the statement that she visited him on the evening of day four, she will call it an outright lie.

Talking to Khoradûr

The Southron is not in the least interested in the affair, but will become visibly upset if the characters tell him that the suitors were killed by poisoned candles, being anxious to dismiss their theory as utter nonsense before the Côr Aran hear of it. If pressed for a theory of his own, he claims that Hirluin probably poisoned the wine to get rid of his rivals. From the fifth day onwards, Khoradûr will of course say nothing whatsoever.

Talking to Hirluin

Because he is a prime suspect, Hirluin realizes that anyone who approaches him from now on might be a Crow. He will therefore be disinclined to converse with strangers. His private opinion is that some other suitor is behind the murder—everyone knows that the six men at the dinner were among Telerien's favorites, so someone else could have arranged the whole thing in order to terminate his most dangerous rivals. He is all too willing to give characters a few names, but has no idea how the deed was accomplished.

Talking to Castarion

Castarion will put the Royal Guard on alert at once after discovering the murders, thanking the Valar that the King is away at his country estates for the moment. As Warden of the Haven, Castarion fears for the safety of his family. He has nothing against answering whatever questions the characters might have, but does not hide his doubt about their ability to solve the mystery. He thinks they should step aside and let Caramir and his men handle the investigation. Khoradûr is a decidedly foul character in his opinion, but since his mother has invited him, Castarion dares not speak out against him. He has no evidence to go by and refuses to speculate on the matter.

Talking to the Servants

Most of the servants suspect supernatural forces, but initially have no guesses as to who brought them forth. From the fourth day onwards, they are convinced that the five noblemen and the Southron were killed by Telerien's black arts, though they dare not admit it openly. Persistent characters may receive a few whispered hints. A gardener saw Telerien as she entered Khoradûr's room in the guest wing of the building.

Talking to Other Suitors

Castarion can present characters with a list of other suitors who were not invited to the dinner. Should the adventurers visit some of them and ask for their opinion, most of the suitors will claim to believe that Hirluin is the culprit. As one of Telerien's favorites, they would be well pleased to have him out of their way.

Talking to the Côr Aran

Caramir has promised Castarion that he will have the Côr Aran investigate the matter, turning his attentions to the surviving suitor, Hirluin. The Crows will be irritated that civilians have been given access to what they think should be classified information. They are much more interested in asking questions than giving answers, and do not hesitate to threaten characters who grow too curious. This might lead some characters to believe that the Côr Aran is guilty of the deed (a theory that should not be discouraged).

Mûrabêth's Mistake (Day 4)

Mûrabêth makes a mistake in resolving to tell her sister the truth. She knows nothing of Telerien's feelings towards the dead Valadan. When she tells her what really happened, the girl becomes furious and starts screaming and throwing things at the bewildered Mûrabêth. It develops into a full-fledged fight before they are interrupted, but neither will explain the reason behind it. Following the confrontation, Telerien sits staring blankly out her window for long hours, fuming with hatred and knowing that she must somehow take revenge before she can ever sleep again. But acting against her sister is unthinkable, so Khoradûr must pay.

Khoradûr's fate (Day 4-5)

Knowing that she is no match for Khoradûr's strength, Telerien resolves to defeat him through her wits and goes to pay him a visit. She tells the initially suspicious Southron that her sister has revealed everything to her, pretending to be merely curious and indifferent to the suitors' fate. She eventually charms him into telling her more about the poison and even showing her the remaining candles. Then, swallowing her disgust, she allows him to seduce her and surrenders to the loathsome Khoradûr's lust. Rising later in the night, careful not to rouse him, she lights some of the lethal candlesticks on the bedside table. Then, she quickly gets dressed and stalks back to her rooms. Telerien spends the rest of the night washing herself.

Khoradûr is found lying in his bed the next morning, as mindless as were the suitors three days earlier. The clammy feeling from the sitting-room can be noticed here as well, in the air and on every object. The other servants hear from the gardener of Telerien's visit to the merchant the previous evening. It is not long before whispered rumors of black magic and of the girl's supposed connections with dark forces begin to circulate.

3.7 ADVENTURE: THE CHARRED CHARTS

A number of damaged scrolls and records have been recovered from the ransacked Royal Archives in Osgiliath. Those that could be restored were packed together and sent to Pelargir about a month ago, and are now stored in the Chamber of Records in Barad Híraer, being sorted and compared with other documents in preparation for scribal restoration. Unbeknownst to those undertaking this task, deadly information lies within Osgiliath's charred documents.

3.7.1 A TALE OF DOCUMENTS ADRIFT

Parmandil, one of the loremasters involved in the search at Osgiliath, is secretly loyal to Eldacar. A week ago he suddenly realized that the documents sent to Pelargir include detailed genealogies and records on Eldacar's Northman relatives, lists of their territories, and probably a few maps as well. No such records have been previously available in Lebennin, and should their contents be brought to the attention of the Usurper, the exact location of the exiled King and his kinsfolk might become known.

The agitated loremaster resolved immediately to intercept the documents in Pelargir, only to be denied access to the archives where they are being kept. If the rightful King is to remain safe, someone from the outside must penetrate the Chamber of Records and attempt to retrieve or destroy the documents before they are read (but merely locating them may prove a daunting task in itself).

Parmandil was involved in compiling these records a few years ago and is painfully aware of the danger they now represent. He has not actually seen them since the sack of Osgiliath, but has read an inventory of the scrolls shipped to Pelargir and was alerted by the heading *"Rhovanion: Families and Properties (water damaged)."* The parenthesis fits perfectly with their last known location, on a lower floor in the Tower of the Stone. Though he cannot assess the extent of their damage, he supposes they are still easily readable.

3.7.2 THE NPCS

PARMANDIL

Note: *See sections 3.4.1, 6.3.2, 6.6.2 for important information pertaining to Parmandil.*

Before its premises were commandeered by the Côr Aran, Parmandil was warden and chief loremaster of the Hall of the Faithful in Pelargir. He retired to a private life on his estate beside the River Serni, but was soon invited by the loremasters of Minas Anor to supervise the recovery and restoration of manuscripts from the ruins of the Royal Archive in Osgiliath

The frail, middle-aged scholar was born in Osgiliath, and has worked in the Royal Archives since his youth. There is nothing wrong with his health, but his body is unused to physical labor and gives him a rather brittle appearance. Parmandil is normally a quiet and rather meek person, though the massacre he witnessed in Osgiliath four years ago has stirred some part of the Adan warrior in him. He nurtures a deep but silent rage at the Usurper and the havoc wrought by him. Unfortunately for Parmandil, his courage far exceeds his abilities.

CAPTAIN AURANDIR (1364-1448†)

A trusted, old garrison officer like Targon, Aurandir declined a promotion in order to stay where he felt most at home. He has been Captain of the Tower Company at Barad Híraer for almost fifty years, and knows every nook and cranny of the tower and every face that commonly visits it. He is not too pleased with the idea of bringing burnt and soaked papers from Osgiliath into the Tower. In his opinion, they ought to have gone directly to the Squire's Hall.

Aurandir is a tall, imposing figure, though he has lately gained some extra fat that he tries in vain to exercise away. Seeing him taking a few unfortunate guards on a brisk march around the edges of the Garth is not unusual.

3.7.3 THE SETTINGS

Barad Híraer rises from the hexagonal isle in the midst of the Garth, whose base rests some sixty feet above the level of the water. Openings on its sides lead to a heavily-guarded grotto, which houses ships of the royal fleet. Stairwells leading from the outer piers through enclosed shafts climb to the base of the tower, and other stairs surrounding the base lead to the fleet headquarters inside the upper level of the isle.

The top of the isle is a large open yard with cranes and cargo winches around its sides, which are patrolled twice an hour by the Tower Company. There are no entrances into the tower at this level. To get inside one must climb an exterior stairway, each end of which is guarded.

LAYOUT OF BARAD HÍRAER

1. Stairway. Leading up to the second level and down to the headquarters of the royal fleet. The downward stairs are seldom used, being barred by a locked, six inch thick, oak door.

2. Storage. This room contains foodstuffs, firewood and other consumables for the Tower Company. It is locked to avoid embezzlement.

3. Lower Barracks. Ten to twenty guards off duty can be found resting or socializing in each of these comfortable rooms. Their weapons are hung on racks beside their beds and can be reached in a moment's notice. Arrow-slits allow them to fire on outside intruders.

4. Main Entrance. The massive steel doors are kept locked and guarded from both inside and outside. It would be Sheer Folly (-50) to attempt to pick them. The outer guards use a bell signal to the inner guards whenever someone approaches the stairway. Behind the doors is a twenty foot long corridor with guard posts in its walls. Both posts have levers which lower a portcullis across the far end of the corridor when turned. The portcullis must be winched up from the inner rooms to be raised again. Trapped intruders can then be fired upon from the adjoining guard rooms through arrow-slits in the walls.

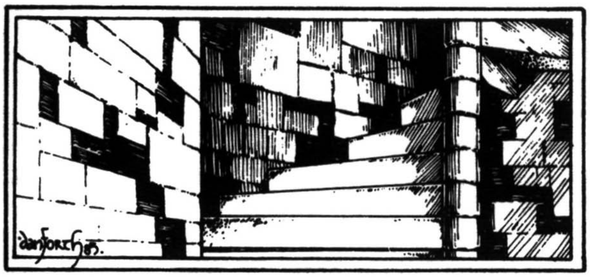
5. Assembly Halls. Built for wartime councils, these halls are used regularly for briefings by the wardens and their subordinates, but are locked and empty when not in use.

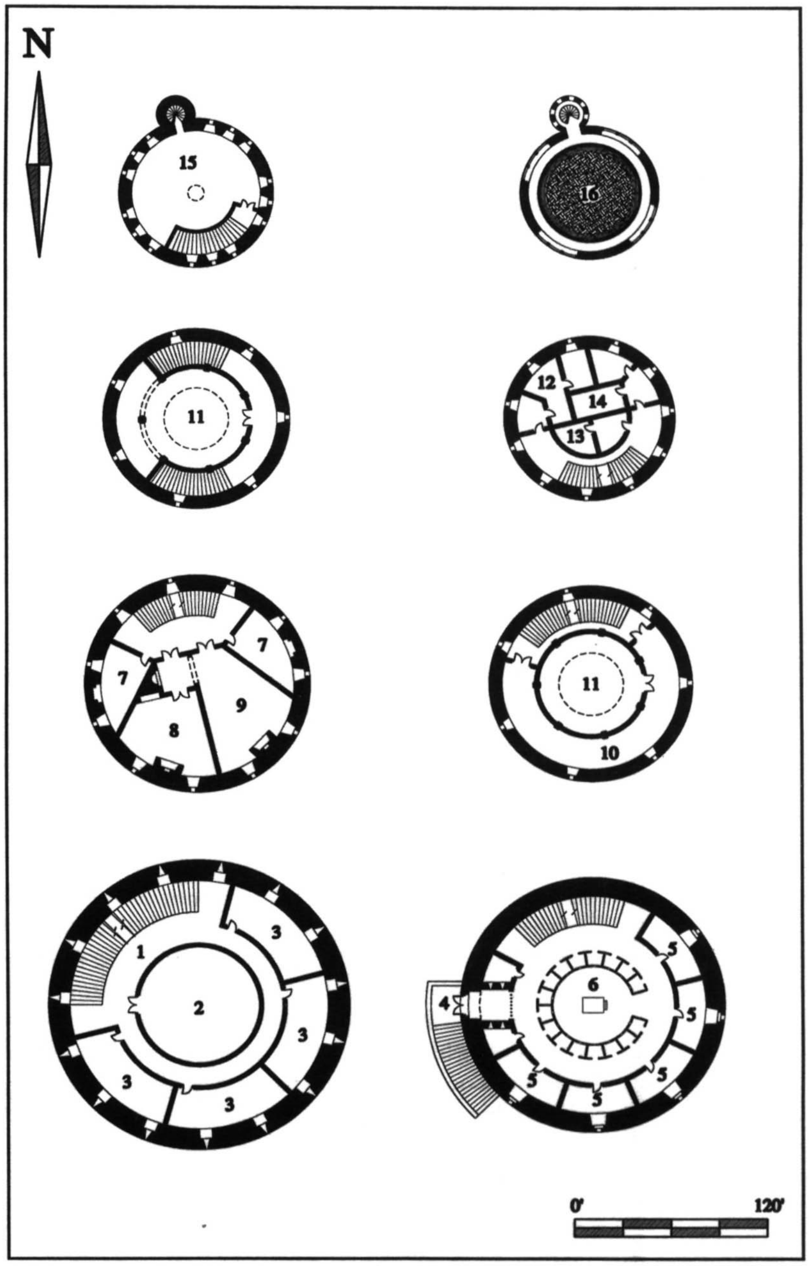
6. The Chamber of Captains. In this venerated hall, the captains of the fleet hold conclaves and vote on naval matters. Each participant sits in an enclosed booth with slits that enable him to see the central dais but not the other captains. The captain presiding over the meetings stands on the dais, an arrangement which allows for sensitive matters to be debated anonymously between the senior officers. The chamber is rather bare and contains nothing of monetary value. It would nonetheless be regarded as a grave offense should someone break into it.

7. Upper Barracks. Similar to #3.

8. Kitchen. An ox-like chief cook and his assistants work in this large room. They are used to hungry soldiers trying to sneak in for a snack between meals, and do not hesitate to throw out intruders forcibly. The food is excellent.

9. Dining Room. Meals are served six times a day in this pleasant room. The guards work in shifts and have to eat at different times around the clock. While off duty, these are sometimes found relaxing in couches by the fireplace.





The Sea-lord's Tower

10. Library. This is a supplementary installment to the Chamber of Records, where new entries are catalogued and updated. It contains an impressive array of books, but the majority of papers are reference texts on the contents of the chamber. The charred charts are not to be found here, though many other damaged documents under restoration are present.

11. The Chamber of Records. This massive, two-story complex houses archives and the second largest collection of written knowledge in Lebennin (after the Hall of the Faithful). The guards who are posted outside can only admit entrance with the consent of the loremasters, and may demand that a visitor produce a written permit specifying his or her errand. The charts are stored in a shelf on the lower floor, along the opposite wall from the entrance, but are not yet assembled in proper order.

12. Lord's Quarters. These apartments serve as a refuge for the Lord of Lebennin should the haven be besieged. The luxurious quarters are never used in peacetime and the reinforced oak doors are locked and Extremely Hard (-30) to pick. The Usurper has visited this place only upon one occasion. The adjacent corridor is always patrolled by a guard.

13. Commander's Quarters. A similar apartment for the commander of the Guard Squadron, which are used regularly and are likely to be occupied when characters enter the tower.

14. Warden's Quarters. Intended to be shared by the captains of the Guard Squadron during a siege, though the rooms are seldom used in peacetime. The squadron commander conducts his business with the River Company here (see Section 3.3.1).

15. Tower Watch. This colonnaded room presents a breathtaking, full-circle view of the haven and its environs. Four guards are always stationed here. A large supply of firewood for a beacon is stored here, along with cages for the tower's flock of carrier pigeons. A special trainer is responsible for feeding the birds and cleaning their cages. The stairs to this level are barred by a steel door which is kept locked by the guards. A spiral stairway leads above the watch to the beacon itself. The Watch also contains a bell, which is rung whenever the beacon is set alight.

16. Beacon. The great beacon of Pelargir is a shallow, twenty-five foot wide bowl filled with firewood. A multitude of thin channels penetrate its bottom in order to feed the fire with a continuous flow of air. A walkway, open at four sides between the bases, encircles the vaulted roof above. Only a thin railing protects the operator from a three hundred foot drop as he walks the perimeter of the beacon and thrusts burning torches into it. Once it catches fire, he must quickly descend to the level of the watch, for no living thing can withstand the heat of the beacon when ablaze. Lighting the beacon without due cause is a crime punishable as treason.

3.7.4 THE TASK

What the characters may do with the documents once these are found is unimportant, so long as they are withheld from the King. Starting a fire in the Chamber of Records would be effective, but would endear them to no one (Parmandil or Eldacar included) as many irreplaceable manuscripts from the Hall of the Faithful have been transferred to Barad Híraer since the Usurper came to power.

STARTING THE CHARACTERS

Parmandil will have no clear idea of where in the tower his documents are to be found. As a last resort, the loremaster may attempt to hire characters at an inn or off the street. Before he becomes that desperate, however, loyalists may receive reports of a strange figure walking about the Garth and nervously watching Barad Híraer, and be sent to investigate before he is arrested by the Tower Guards. If characters have a friend in Pelargir with scholarly connections, then Parmandil may be acquainted with him or her and pay a visit, seeking out help.

AIDS

All Parmandil will be able to tell involved characters is that the Chamber of Records is located on one of the upper levels of Barad Híraer. He can also describe the documents: four scrolls with green ribbons, lying in tubes marked "*III, 1434*" (the year of their make), in addition to three or four scrolls in similar tubes with land register maps of the Buhr Widu area. As far as he is aware, all are damaged by moisture.

OBSTACLES

The first (and probably most difficult) obstacle to the recovery of the documents is entrance into the tower. Characters must cross two hundred and fifty feet of open water to reach the isle, and given its central and well-guarded position, it would be unreasonable to hope to enter without discovery unless the characters are exceedingly skilled in avoiding detection. A more effective approach might be to don disguises or forge official papers to obtain access to the Chamber of Records. The guards of the Tower Company are not likely to let strangers enter Barad Híraer without a very good reason.

Another obstacle is the sheer volume of written material within the Chamber of Records. There are more than fifty thousand volumes, sorted in an intricate, management-based system that places the damaged records under *"Evaluations,"* somewhere in the middle of it all. Scribes from the Squire's Hall are working on the shipment from Osgiliath during daylight hours, and can be of some help unless characters act suspiciously.

Characters with keen noses may actually be able to trace the shelf in question by the faint, smoky odor of the documents, but the damaged documents alone include more than a thousand scrolls of varying quality. The records on Eldacar's family are intact, but their tubes have been soaked and dried several times over. The markings Parmandil spoke of are difficult to read. Locating them naturally depends on characters being literate. All are written in Adûnaic, with translations appended to most Westron names.

Parmandil would be of no use to the characters, and would simply not be up to the task should they wish to bring him with them to Barad Híraer.

Outcomes

Parmandil has little money and very few connections, so not much can be offered in the way of direct payment. Provided the characters feel some loyalty to Eldacar (if not, they would have very little reason to embark on this adventure in the first place), the satisfaction of having done the right thing ought to be reward enough. It is possible that no one else will detect their activity, but things may look different if others have been informed of the deed. The Dîn Lammen, recognizing the magnitude of the task, will most likely have the resources and inclination to reward them in kind.

3.7.5 ENCOUNTERS

No specific timeline can be given for this adventure, as nothing in particular happens apart from the actions of the characters themselves. Some five weeks will pass following Parmandil's arrival in Pelargir before the scribes are scheduled to begin examination of the papers and make a report to Prince Castaher (but unless the characters have access to divination, they will be unaware of this fact).

The Tower Company

The Company's first priority is to see that no intruders reach the ships beneath the tower. The characters will thus have to evade the most alert guards before they reach the top of the isle. Those posted inside are not expecting anything to happen there, but the tower also houses barracks for off-duty soldiers, who tend to move around the first and third levels of Barad Híraer on a regular basis. It should be made clear to the players that it would be exceptionally stupid to attack the guards and kill them off as they go. Large, open spaces outside and people walking about inside make discovery of a dead or missing guard a matter of minutes. If an alarm is sounded, soldiers will rush to their posts and four patrols will comb the entire complex. Such characters may count themselves lucky to leave the isle in one piece.

The gamemaster should note that the tower garrison is not an elite force, though the characters might be misled by the central location of the tower to expect it to be occupied by high-ranking Requain (S. "Knights") on a regular basis. The guards of Barad Híraer are common soldiers, equal in competence to those who patrol the city streets. Any attempt to fool them with forged warrants is therefore feasible if executed with care, provided that such attempts pass the scrutiny of Aurandir.

Scribes and Loremasters

The staff of the Chamber of Records consists of scribes sent from the Squire's Hall to examine damaged records, none of whom are present in Barad Híraer at night. Less than half of these materials have been catalogued, and inquiring characters will be advised to return when the restoration has been completed. A number of loremasters, formerly resident in the Hall of the Faithful, assist these scribes in their duties. Both groups are accustomed to warrants requesting documents, but would be initially hesitant to permit strangers access to uncatalogued acquisitions from Osgiliath, and will not hesitate to call for the guard should they be confronted with overly-suspicious inquiries.

3.8 ADVENTURE: GUARDS, CROWS, AND HORRID SCUM

The existence of two parallel security forces in Pelargir—the Royal Guard and the Côr Aran—often goes hand-in-hand with rivalry and a lack of cooperation. Only crises bring these two groups together. Sometimes, a crisis must be manufactured by one of the groups in question in order to bring this about.

3.8.1 A TALE OF ASSASSINS AND FALL GUYS

The Côr Aran have learned from Sinyadal that the Horrid Scum are planning an attempt on Morgalad's life in the near future, but do not yet have enough details to prevent it themselves and consequently desire to strengthen security. But an old rivalry between Caramir and Morgalad makes it improbable that the latter would believe an official warning from the Côr Aran, construing it instead as an indication of some devious scheme of Caramir's.

Practically every informant in Pelargir regularly pesters the Royal Guard with dubious tips and warnings, and alerting Morgalad about unidentified assailants who will strike at some time during the coming month will simply have no effect. Producing precise times and places is another matter. If the characters accept the mission, Gilgôr will have an anonymous note sent to Morgalad.

3.8.2 THE NPCS

Gilgôr (1404-1448†)

Originally assigned to a Côr Aran cell in Minas Anor, Gilgôr's inability to cooperate with his superior led to his recent transfer back to the nest in Pelargir. Caramir trusts his abilities, but uses them sparingly in the field in order to ensure that his face does not become a familiar sight in the haven. Gilgôr does not care about what becomes of the characters so long as they serve their purpose within his plans. He is glad to be working actively for once, and does not feel inclined to argue with characters about further assistance or more payment. He is a proficient actor and will strive to give the impression that he has confidence in their abilities, but is somewhat nervous given to the importance of their mission.

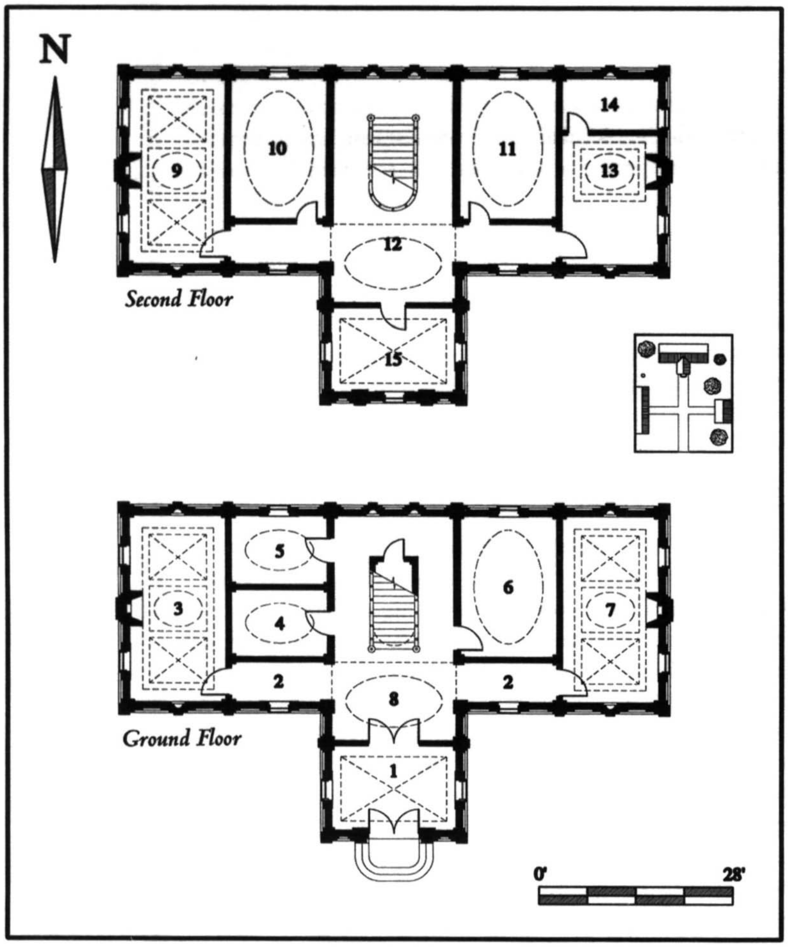
Gilgôr is a tall and wiry man with piercing dark eyes and dark, well-kept hair. He is dressed in a nondescript city-dweller style. He gives a friendly impression, though that is just a facade.

Captain Morgalad (1400-1448†)

The captain of the Royal Guard is an old friend of the Usurper and fought with him in the campaign against Eldacar. He is a fierce warrior by all standards—strong enough to wield his huge broadsword with ease, and widely reputed for fits of battle frenzy. Although Castamir was responsible for his current appointment, Morgalad has been at odds with the King's cousin for the greater part of his military career, and is the only man able to call Caramir by his childhood nickname and live. He is of minor noble descent but has married into House Lintoron, making any assassination attempt politically sensitive; but characters may be unaware of this fact.

Morgalad is tall even by Dúnadan standards and very athletic. He has curly brown hair flowing down to the shoulders and stern grey eyes. He prefers to dress in uniform. He is a haughty fellow, convinced of the supremacy of the Dúnedain over the common people.

Rond Morgalad



3.8.3 THE SETTING

Morgalad resides in a small but luxurious house, Rond Morgalad, which is adjacent to the Lord's House on the Garth. He has a second apartment in the Lord's House itself, but seldom uses it. A stable and shed adjoin the main building, which is guarded by a small detachment of the Royal Guard (normally no more than four men). All windows are locked and Hard (-10) to pick from the outside. Smashing them will make a noise audible three blocks away.

Layout of Rond Morgalad

1. Foyer. There is no furniture here, apart from carpets and hangers for cloaks. The front door is locked at night and Very Hard (-20) to pick. One guard is normally posted in front of it, but there will be two on the expected night of the assassination attempt, a detail which may well alert the characters that something is wrong.

2. Corridor. This short stretch of hallway is adorned with an ancient tapestry depicting Elendil's flight from the Akallabêth. Morgalad's father spent a fortune having the tapestry restored to its original colors, and Morgalad would be furious if something were to happen to it.

3. Kitchen. Large and well equipped, including a large oven for baking bread. A trapdoor leads down to a small earthen cellar where foodstuffs may be stored in cool temperatures.

4. Maids' Chamber. This is the bedroom for the maids who work for Morgalad and his family, and is furnished with beds, closets and a wash stand. A quick search through their belongings reveals only clothes and a bundle of letters (love letters to one of the maids from her betrothed).

5. Servant's Chamber. Morgalad's manservant resides here. The room is furnished much like the maids' chamber, but includes a small desk. Apart from a collection of rare sea-shells, there is nothing of note to be found here.

6. Guest Room. This fine bedroom is seldom used, but at present houses two guards who sit waiting in the darkness, ready for action as soon as they hear creaks from the stairway (#8).

7. Dining Room. Morgalad and his family take their meals in this large room. It is somberly decorated, with numerous paintings of family ancestors on the walls. One of the window frames is slightly warped and easy to pry open with a dagger, which is mentioned in Gilgôr's notes. Morgalad expects that assassins will attempt to enter here, but has left the room unguarded in order to lure them on.

8. Stairs. A short stairway leads to the upper floor. A few of the steps are very creaky, something Gilgôr's notes fail to mention. There is a small closet beneath the stairs, where Morgalad's wife has stored clothes and assorted memorabilia from Tindómë's childhood.

9. Parlor. The family relaxes together in this room. It is finely decorated with plush carpets, paintings, a cupboard with flasks of wine, and a small library which includes Morgalad's collection of travel narratives. All of the furniture has been moved up against the walls to clear space should fighting break out here. Morgalad and two guards are present, ready for battle.

10. Morgalad's Bedroom. This room contains a huge canopied bed, numerous closets, a wash stand below a large mirror, and two small bedside tables. The closets have been emptied and house four guards with smarting feet, waiting to burst forth on the characters' arrival. Two more guards, a man and a woman, have the dubious honor of lying in the bed to play the part of the sleeping captain and his wife. They are dressed in full armor beneath the sheets, and are sweating profusely. There is a secret compartment (-30 to open) in the wall behind the mirror, which normally contains the family's personal wealth in the form of money and jewelry, but its contents have been removed and brought with Morgalad's wife.

11. Tindómë's Bedroom. This is the room of Morgalad's only child, his daughter Tindómë. It is obvious at first glance that it belongs to a girl in her mid-teens, though she has carefully removed and taken with her any belongings of possible interest to burglars.

12. Upper Hall. According to Gilgôr's notes, guards will be posted here, but Morgalad has ordered these into room #15, in order to ensure that the assassins will have no means of escape.

13. Study. A secondary office for Morgalad, who uses this room for the administrative aspects of his office. A search through his desks will reveal bundles of payment rolls, schedules, and so forth, but he has moved all sensitive or important papers to the Lord's House for the night. The door to the study is locked. Gilgôr's notes do not mention it, but one of the windows, placed directly above the one mentioned in room #7, is likewise warped and easy to open if one can get to it. It is a Hard (-10) Perception roll to discern this from the ground.

14. Storage. This small room contains old clothes, souvenirs from around Gondor, and similar trinkets that the family does not have the heart to throw away.

15. Guard Room. This room lies directly above the foyer and is used as a lounge by the guards. A single bed, a table, and a few chairs are its only contents. Two guards are sitting here, playing cards while they wait for something to happen.

3.8.4 THE TASK

It is important that players receive the impression that their characters are being recruited for an ordinary "seek and destroy" type of adventure, and initial negotiations should proceed in whatever way they are used to, so as to induce a sense of familiarity. When Gilgôr approaches the characters, he will begin the conversation as a friendly chat over a mug of ale. When he is sure that they are strangers to the haven, he will gradually inquire as to their possible interest in an operation with high stakes. He will stress to them the need for absolute secrecy before revealing what he wants them to do, perhaps insisting that they go to a more secluded place to talk.

STARTING THE CHARACTERS

This adventure begins when Gilgôr, a high-ranking Côr Aran officer, approaches the characters in the venerated "stranger at the inn" fashion, claiming to be the leader of a loyalist group. Gilgôr wishes to hire them to dispose of Morgalad, the Captain of the Royal Guard, and is able to supply them with detailed plans of the captain's manor, exact times for the changing of the guard, and so forth.

AIDS

Gilgôr's detailed background information regarding Rond Morgalad appears to be an important aid. The information regarding Morgalad's residence includes a map of the grounds surrounding the manor, floorplans of the main building with guard positions marked on it, a schedule giving the times for the changing of the guard, and a fairly accurate sketch of Morgalad himself. Gilgôr gives them a tip of a favorable time to make the attempt in suggesting that there will less people in the house than usual (which will, of course, be the same date and time that he gives Morgalad in his note).

If Thorondil has assessed their capabilities favorably (see "Obstacles" below), would-be assassins may receive assistance from the Horrid Scum. He and a few henchmen will be hiding outside the manor, ready to intervene should something go awry. In this way, a loyalist attack may do away with several prominent officers as well as Morgalad, while giving the characters a chance to escape.

OBSTACLES

The main obstacle is, of course, the fact that Morgalad is aware of the attempt to kill him. He has doubled the guard at the manor during the night in question, and has prepared a few rooms where additional soldiers will lay in wait—all in all, fourteen Royal Guard will be present in the building. Morgalad is far too proud to be absent, but intends to await for the would-be assassins in his own parlor, adjoining the bedroom. He definitely does not plan to use his bed that night!

Another obstacle may arise if the Horrid Scum catch word that someone else is after their prey. Such word might be disclosed if someone connected to the loyalists—perhaps the innkeeper or some other customer at the inn—overheard Gilgôr's conversation with the characters. Thorondil will send a few henchmen to put them out of action before they can spoil his plans, but will re-evaluate the situation should the characters thwart the attack against them—if they are really capable of completing the assassination, why not let them do it?

Outcomes

Gilgôr promises the characters rich rewards if they kill the captain. Of course, he does not intend to pay them anything. He may, however, be forced to if they become suspicious and begin demanding some advance payment. Gilgôr cannot refuse such an advance without arousing further suspicions. (The fact that no one from the alleged loyalist group will accompany them on the operation is dubious enough.) Still, he will produce no coin unless the characters threaten to back out of the deal, in which case he will agree to advance each assassin fifty gold pieces. Looting opportunities inside the manor may present themselves, should the characters find sufficient time. Since all depends on the characters, it is possible that the adventure will provide them with no rewards at all. That is the hard fact of life: sometimes one must be content with having gotten away alive.

Provided that the characters escape with their lives, they will most likely be interested in tracking down the treacherous Crow. By then, however, there will be a price on their heads. The City Guard now believe that the characters are the terrorists they have been looking for, and the Côr Aran are eager not to have one of their agents exposed.

If the unlikely happens, and Morgalad is killed, this reward will escalate from five to eight hundred gold pieces per head—enough to attract even the interest of the Straight Man. Whatever happens, they will never see Gilgôr again. He has already gone undercover outside the city walls to ensure that his face will not in any way be connected to the attempted assassination.

This adventure can thus be used as the hook for a resistance campaign, especially if characters already know of the Dîn Lammen. The two loyalist groups would be a force to be reckoned with if only someone brought them together. Should characters accomplish that, they would have dealt a serious blow to the Usurper on his home ground. The Horrid Scum will probably make contact with the PCs, whether they succeed or not. Their reception naturally depends on how they fare with Morgalad, but in any case they can no longer dwell openly in Pelargir.

3.8.5 ENCOUNTERS

Day 1: The youth Sinyadal learns of the Horrid Scum's plans, but is unable to learn the exact date of the attempt—only that it will take place at the captain's residence sometime next week. He delivers this report to the Crows the following evening.

Day 4: Prospective characters are approached by Gilgôr at an inn and receive instructions. These same instructions are sent with a warning to Morgalad later that evening.

Day 7: The planned date for the assassination attempt, and the subsequent clash with the Royal Guard.

Day 10: The planned date for the Horrid Scum's assassination attempt, which will not take place unless the characters abort their own operation prematurely.

Meeting Other Loyalists

The characters may desire to meet their loyalist employers. Gilgôr will refuse, though, saying the group's anonymity must not be jeopardized before Morgalad is killed. If they try to contact the loyalists themselves, they will naturally have no idea of where to look. Asking strange questions at local taverns will most likely result in their being reported to the garrison. They may stumble upon a clue to the Horrid Scum if they are lucky, but this should only happen after a long and methodical search. There is also the possibility that one of the characters are already familiar with one of the loyalist groups.

In either case, mention of Gilgôr's name to real loyalists may have grave consequences. Both groups know that no such person exists among their ranks, and will consequently be eager to meet him—is he representing another group in Pelargir previously unknown to them? Carnendil would ask the PCs to arrange a meeting with this man, thereby risking exposure of the Dîn Lammen to the Crows, though he has a chance of recognizing Gilgôr from the Hall of the Faithful if he sees him. Thorondil has no way of knowing who Gilgôr really is.

Watching Morgalad

If the characters perform some reconnaissance prior to their attempt, they may discover that their intended target seems to expect trouble. For example, his family and most of the house staff leave the manor in carts during the day before the planned assassination night, taking a load of valuables with them. Likewise, observant characters ought to see that something is wrong once they are inside the building. Attempts to abort the operation at an early stage should have a fair chance of success.

Fighting Morgalad

The chances of escaping Morgalad's trap alive largely depends on the characters' ability to keep moving. Defeating fifteen opponents in a closed space is a near hopeless task even for the best of warriors. If they can flee they have a small chance to get out alive. The gamemaster should keep in mind, however, that the guards are spread over the manor, and many will have difficulty in locating intruders once combat ensues, especially in darkness. The whole scenario changes if the characters decide to ignore Gilgôr's advice on a suitable point of time, and make their attempt earlier or later than Morgalad expects. The guard's vigilance will still be stronger than usual, but not as tense as on the planned night.

4.0 UMBAR

For the greater part of the first millenium of the Third Age, Umbar was independently ruled by Black Númenóreans. Although these survivors of the King's Men were Gondor's implacable enemies, their relative military weakness made it possible for Gondor to ignore their threat to a large extent. The inhabitants of Umbar made their living principally off of sea-borne trade (which included extensive clandestine trade with Gondor).

Umbar was captured by Gondorian forces in T.A. 933, but its surrounding territory remained unconquered for more than a century, during which the city was besieged or blockaded by Black Númenórean and Southron forces. This prolonged conflict dampened Umbar's importance to the landward trade from Harad Its stature was not regained until Hyarmendacil's great victory over the coastlands in T.A. 1050, after which the city prospered greatly.

Under the protection of Gondor's naval supremacy, Umbar became the capital of all the coastal territory south of the River Harnen. The remaining citizens of Black Númenórean or Southron descent reconciled themselves to Gondorian rule, and the territory was peaceful for a long time. Once the principal Númenórean port in Endor, Umbar in T.A. 1441 is still a large city, and one of the richest in the realm.

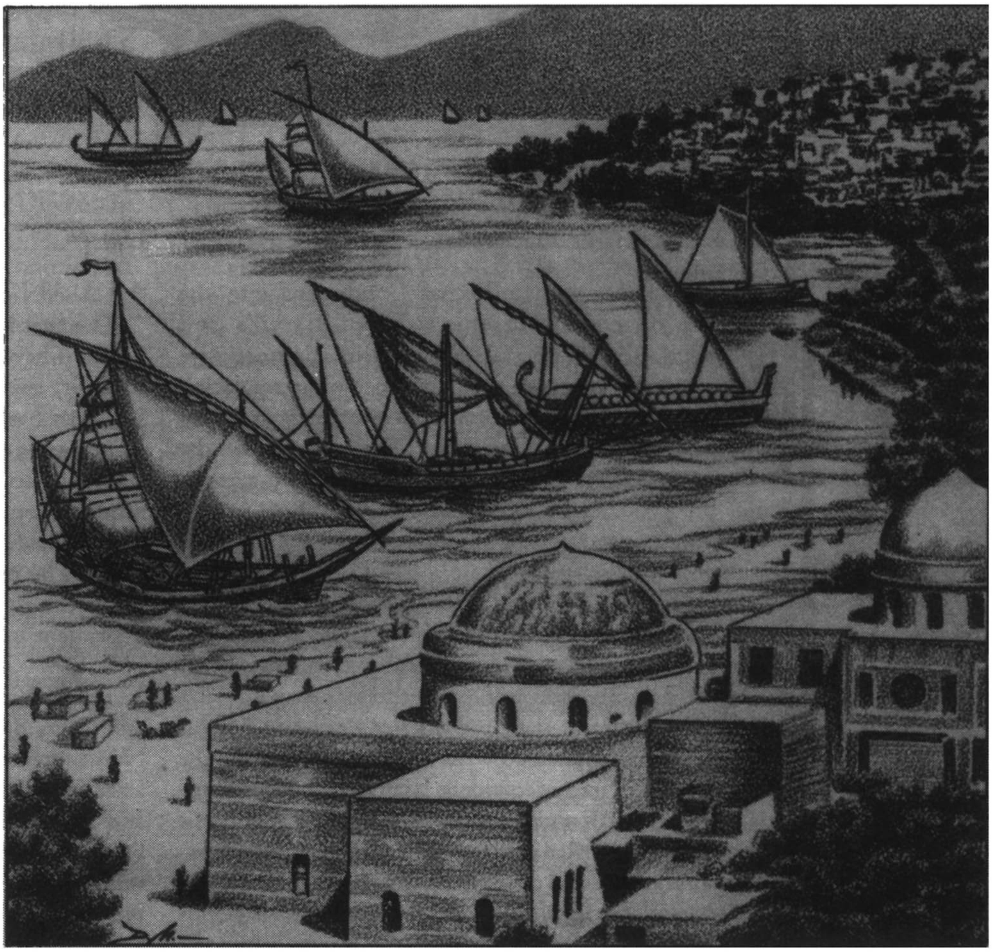
4.1 A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

As heirs of Númenórean hegemony, the Kings of Gondor claim the entirety of Near Harad, but tacitly recognize the independence of the Haradwaith beyond the coastal region, so long as their tribes do not overly disturb trade along the coasts, the Men Falas, or the Rath Khand by raiding. The formal territory of Umbar encompasses all the land between the mouths of the Harnen and the Cuiviërant, but a chain of Gondorian forts and harbours extends along the coast of Belegaer as far south as far as the Cape of Squids at the entrance to the bay of Tulwang, to the edge of Bozisha-Dar's sphere of influence.

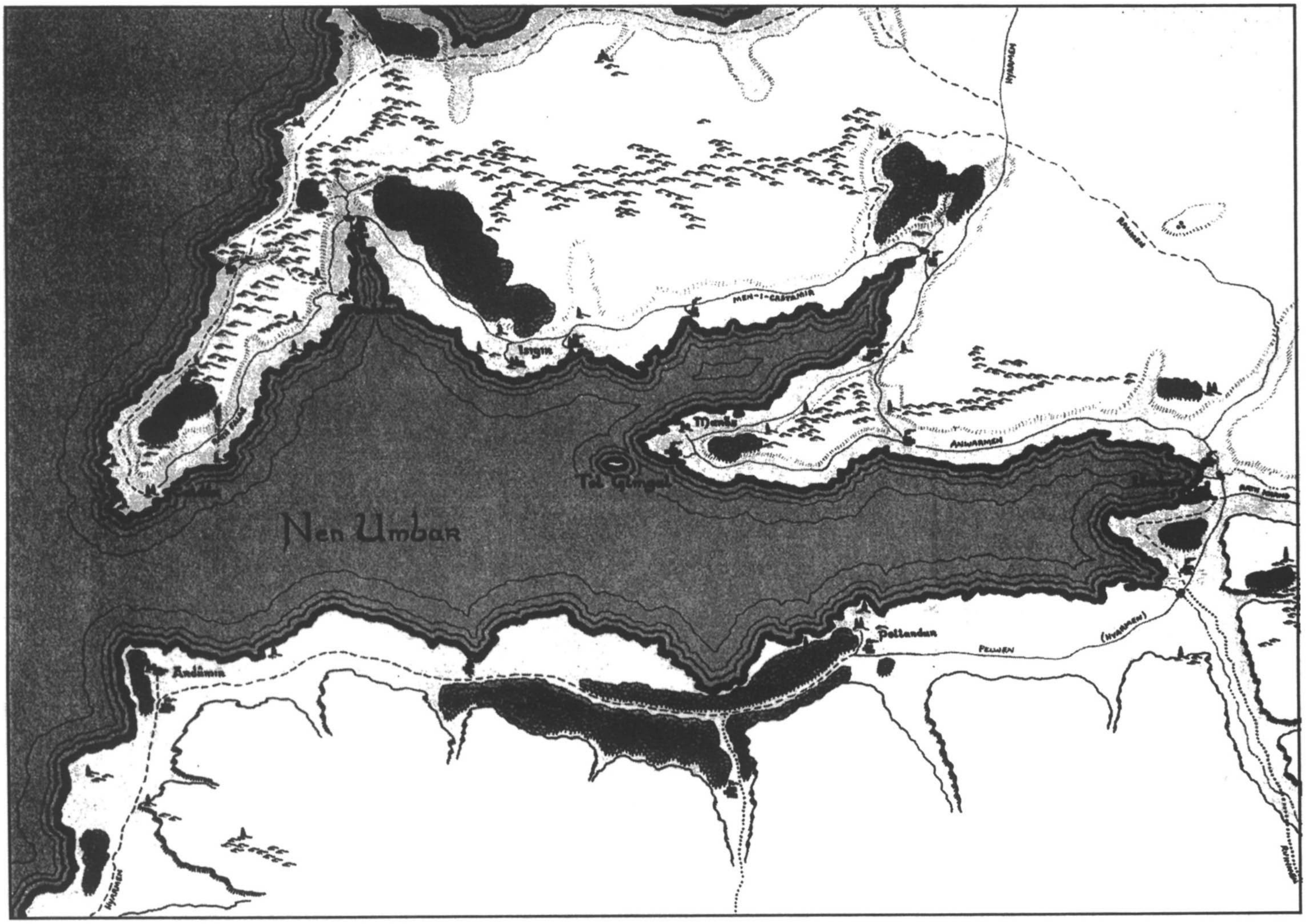
The northern and eastern coasts of the Bay of Umbar are quite lush and are wooded in several areas. The hilly region is graced with many small flowering dales. Outside the peninsula, fertile land is, however, limited to the coastal regions; even the few river valleys are quite dry, and the majority of Umbar's territory supports only scrawny bushes and hardy grasses. East of Umbar, vegetation is sparse or non-existent, save for the few oases that dot the desert. It is a rugged land where only the hardy survive, and settlement centers around the few iron mines in the mountainous interior.

Despite the large size of the Gondor-controlled territory, its population is quite small, numbering some 600,000 inhabitants between the Harnen and Cuiviërant, most of which are concentrated in the northern and eastern coast of the Nen Umbar. The shoreland north of Númerös and south of Ardûmir are sparsely settled, supporting only a scattering of small towns, a few villages and hamlets.

Considering the poor land and small population, a surprisingly large number of people (for mercantile or historical reasons) live in Umbar and Dûsalan, the only two urban settlements of any importance. Most of these are of Black Númenórean descent, and have lived here since the original colonization during the second millenium of the Second Age. Five centuries of prosperous Gondorian rule have reconciled them with the historical viewpoint of the Faithful, but still allows them a chauvinistic understanding of their role in the world.



Umbar's shore



Hyarmenfalas

There has been an influx of Gondorians into the territory of Umbar in the wake of Eärnil's and Hyarmendacil's conquests, especially in administrative and mercantile roles. A small number of immigrating nobles also received territorial estates or manors, along with peasants to colonize them. The majority of the population remains Southron enjoying a settled agricultural life centered upon coastal villages. These groups retain their tribal organization, where the village headman or chief is the highest local authority.

The more densely populated peninsula of Nen Umbar is governed in ways similar to central Gondor and comprises an administrative district subject to the city of Umbar. (The city, however, constitutes its own jurisdiction.) The legate of the rural district resides in Marös, where a district council convenes. An anomaly within the district is the semi-independent Isigir area (see below).

The land north and south of the district of Umbar is divided into two tribal districts. The administrative apparatus is minuscule and only intended to keep the necessary contacts with the local chiefs and headmen. The legate of the northern district resides in Eithel Angir, while the legate of the southern district resides in Dûsalan.

4.1.1 AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The first settlers from Númenor arrived around S.A. 1200. They settled by the northern, more accessible harbour. Even then, a town was envisioned beside the southern harbour, and the first settlement was not regarded as a permanent town. When the southern harbour was ready to receive ships, the northern settlement had acquired some permanency despite its temporary status and a considerable part of the population did not want to move. The result was the development of a dual settlement: the city of Umbar by the southern port and the dependent town of Vinyamar adjacent to the northern port.

The area continued to receive settlers from Númenor, and it was not long before Umbar was the pre-eminent Númenórean settlement in Endor. The Akallabêth brought an eclipse to the port's splendor. With the fall of the King and the drowning of Númenor, a civil war broke out between followers of the Cult of Melkor and those repenting the ways of Ar-Pharazôn. After a long and bloody war, Sauron's supporters were driven out and the temple of Melkor, built on Tol Cirya in the harbour of Vinyamar, was thrown down.

The towns recovered during the first millenium of the Third Age, but slowly since Umbar did not have the support of and trade with Númenor any longer. Toward the end of the millenium, dark forces once more gained influence and, in T.A. 922, a new civil war broke out. The followers of the dark ways took control of Tol Cirya and started to rebuild the temple from its ruins. The King of Gondor, Eärnil I, stepped in to battle the forces of shadow. Internally divided and exhausted by the civil war, there was scant resistance from the Umbareans. Many inhabitants greeted the coming of the King with joy, since it meant the fall of the temple and the cult.

A few resisted Gondor's conquest of Umbar. They allied with Southron princes, and the dual towns were besieged or blockaded until T.A. 1050, when Hyarmendacil I crossed the Harnen and annihilated his foes in a battle outside the port. The princes of Harad acknowledged the power of Gondor, bowed and made homage to the King.

4.1.2 COASTAL TOWNS

The region of Umbar differs from most other provinces and territories of Gondor in that a large part of its urban population is concentrated in the single city of Umbar and the port's dependent Vinyamar. The few towns outside the city are insignificant by comparison. The castles of Isigir and Ardûmir were constructed in the time of Ar-Pharazôn (S.A. 2370). The latter serves as the country residence of the Gondorian military governor.

DÛSALAN
(POPULATION: 5,000)

Dûsalan is the largest settlement outside Umbar. It situated on the estuary of the Gondeithel. The small, vigorous market-town serves as the local commercial center for the arable land along the Gondeithel valley and its adjoining coasts, in addition to functioning as an important military outpost. The local legate is housed in a citadel built by Hyarmendacil, which supports a garrison of 200 line infantry, 100 Southron cavalry, and 100 archers from Anfalas. Though most are Dúnadan, the inhabitants of Dûsalan are of diverse origin.

MARÖS
(POPULATION: 2,900)

The town of Marös is a small, thriving commercial center for the rich agricultural area of the peninsula which bears its name. The legate, council, and administrative apparatus for the rural district of Umbar are based here.

EITHEL ANGIR
(POPULATION: 1,500)

Eithel Angir is a small, safe harbour three leagues south of Ethir Harnen. The port is the residence of the legate to the northern tribal district and is garrisoned with a hundred men. A stream flows into the sea next to the town, where a long sandbank has formed a small, but deep basin on the northern side of the estuary. A redoubt on the south side of the town houses the garrison.

NÚMERÖS
(POPULATION: 1,800)

Númerös is a small harbour town with a local fishing industry. It is located on the western side of the peninsula of Umbar, midway between the village of Caldûr and the old ruins of Vamag. The fishermen of Númerös are well-known for their daring feats, and their sturdy, locally-built fishing boats are very popular among fishermen along the entire coast.

ISIGIR
(GARRISON: 80)

Isigir forms a semi-independent enclave within the district of Umbar. It was established by Hyarmendacil in T.A. 1132, The King granted it, together with extensive privileges, to Lord-captain Varmacil. The fief is presently ruled by Varmacil's descendant Alcatar. The castle of Isigir supports a small garrison of sixty line infantry and twenty Anfalas archers.

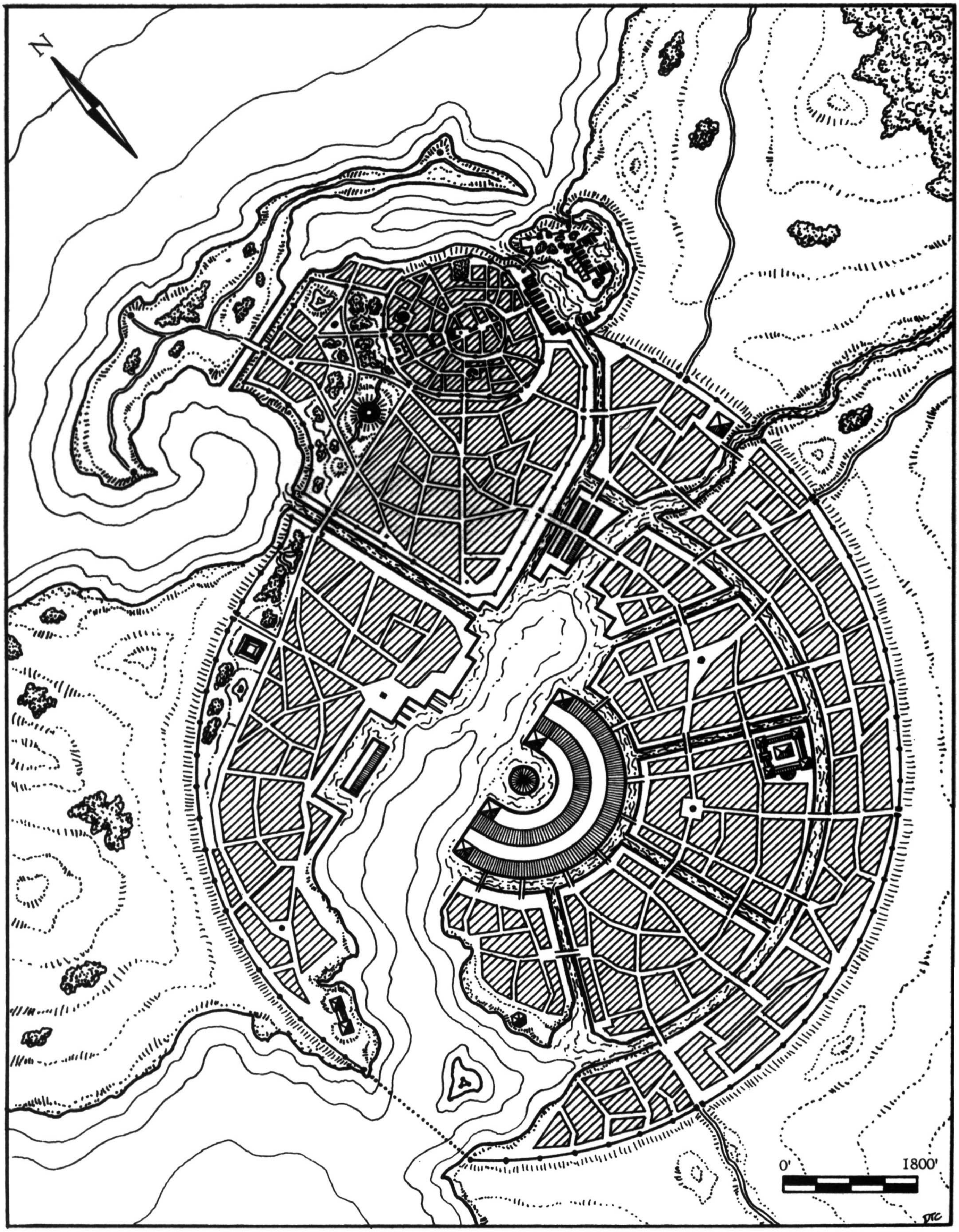
4.2 CITY LAYOUT

The city of Umbar was founded in the middle of the Second Age, and it later became one of the chief Númenórean strongholds in Endor. Two excellent harbours and its proximity to landward trade routes ensured that the port grew quickly, despite the limits of its agricultural hinterland. In actuality, the urban community is a dual settlement consisting of the city of Umbar beside the southern harbour and the town of Vinyamar along the northern harbour.

4.2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY

The original Númenórean city was surrounded by a wall in S.A. 2280, as was the town of Vinyamar. Subsequent growth led Ar-Pharazôn in S.A. 3270 to commission the construction of a second wall around Vinyamar. In the war after the capture by Eärnil, several more fortifications were built, and the walls of the city and the town were rebuilt or enhanced. During these years the fortress on Tol Cirya, Tar Cirya, was erected as was the pillar of Tar-Calion above Umbar.

Continued Umbarean animosity towards the Faithful of Gondor and Arnor crippled the port's economic power after the Akallabêth. The diminished flow of trade negatively affected its growth, and Umbar's size remained constant between the time of the downfall of Númenor and the Gondorian conquest. Not until after Hyarmendacil's victory did renewed mercantile activity return prosperity to Umbar. The city has since expanded beyond its wall and is now surrounded by residences, gardens, and shops on nearly all sides. This circumstance would constitute a serious problem in the event of a siege. Due to peace brought by the strength of Gondor, the last centuries have offered few incentives to rectify it.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The northern harbour was found to be too small in the wake of the Gondorian conquest, and plans were made to enlarge it by creating a separate military harbour on the eastern side of Tol Cirya. These plans were, however, only slowly enacted. The unchallenged supremacy of Gondor on the Great Sea and in Haradwaith did not make it an urgent matter. Very little had been done when Castamir became Captain of Ships in T.A. 1384. He resumed the work and, by T.A. 1441, most docks and wharfs in the new harbour were completed (though many buildings had yet to be erected). The old harbour wall across Tol Cirya was pulled down and the erection of a new one, surrounding the entire eastern basin, was begun.

4.2.2 CITY DEFENSES

Umbar is surrounded by one large wall, which is forty-five feet high and twenty-five feet thick. Its superior stonework is one of the best existing examples of Númenórean genius, being strong and beautiful, with the varying sizes and colors of its stones forming a pleasing pattern. A walk-way along the top of the wall is protected by a five-foot thick barbican interspersed with crenellation.

The gates are comprised of circular towers. The road runs through the first story of each. A stout wooden door with many artistic iron fittings and a portcullis controls access to both the inside and outside, and murder holes in the floor of the second story enables defenders to pour hot tar or boiling oil on attackers. D-shaped towers and postern gates fortify the city wall. Their top floors are open platforms, while the lower floors serve as barracks, armories, and storage space.

Vinyamar is surrounded by two walls. The inner encircles the small knoll upon which the original settlement was built . This first wall is very similar to the walls of Umbar. The outer wall of the city is thirty-five feet high and twenty feet thick. It boasts a twenty-five foot wide earthen ditch on its periphery. The ditch is twenty feet deep. but has been partly filled with refuse in some places. The outer wall is punctuated by two main gates, three postern gates, and eight towers of similar design to those of the first wall. Hastily fashioned from large rectangular blocks of sand-coloured stone, this fortification is far less aesthetically pleasing than the walls of Umbar.

4.2.3 INTERESTING LOCALITIES

In Umbar

Umbarean houses are designed to allow for a maximum living space in the smallest possible area of land, averaging two or three narrow stories in height (although most wealthier citizens own houses with private courtyards). Domiciles outside the second wall are generally more spacious. Many private residences in Umbar possess rainwater cisterns; the city itself has a large cistern system, in the event of a siege, which is fed by several local artesian wells. The main cistern of Umbar lies beneath the city's central market place and is supplemented by run-off from the fountain there.

1. The Governor's Palace. This small but comfortable residence (hardly a palace) was originally a town-house built during the Second Age, but was purchased by the Gondorian crown in T.A. 935 because of its central location beside the city's main square. It was constructed in an old Númenórean style with stones of differing colours and a very beautiful fresco along the second floor.

2. The Town Hall. This building, located on the square opposite the governor's palace, contains the offices of the city administration, the meeting place of the city council, and large halls for use by the guilds. It is built in light grey stone with artful stone carvings around the windows.

3. Quarters of the City Watch. This tower by (the eastern gate of the first wall) serves as headquarters for the City Watch. The top floor of the building has private accommodations for Captain Mardil, but the members of the Watch themselves have their own residences elsewhere in the city. The ground floor contains office space and a bedroom for the officer on duty. The intermediate floors are used by the watchmen.

4-7. Inns. Umbar has many inns of all classes and reputations. The Golden Crown (#4) outside the western gate of the first wall is considered to be one of the best. In general, inns become sleazier the closer to the harbour they are situated. At a place like the Drunken Southron (#5, see Section 4.6.3), one must occasionally defend one's belongings and/or life. There are many inns of medium quality, such as the Horseman (#6).

8. The Theatre. This structure is in frequent use for plays, games, and other popular events that attract spectators from all social classes.

In Vinyamar

Vinyamar is administered from Umbar and so possesses few government buildings. It has an ambience similar to, but more refined than the greater port.

1. The Town Hall. Since Vinyamar is ruled from Umbar, the town hall has no great significance. It is accordingly a modest building by the main square, mainly used by the local guilds.

2. Tar-Cirya. This tower rises from the summit of Tol Cirya in the midst of Umbar's harbour, and serves as the office for the Southern Division of the fleet, as well as the private residence of Lord-captain Menelmir. The tower is eighty feet high and has six floors.

4.2.4 THE HARBOURS

Umbar's first harbour, which serviced both merchant and military vessels, was built by the Númenóreans in the basin between Vinyamar and Tol Cirya, and later became known as the northern harbour. But even then, a larger harbour was planned on the southern side of the peninsula; great works were initiated, and the wharfs and piers of the southern harbour were constructed.

These two harbours served well as commercial centers of Umbar but the naval establishment was not large. Númenor had full control of the Seas and did not need a large navy, and, after the Akallabêth, Umbar was in no position to build a navy. After the conquest, Hyarmendacil decided to base a large squadron in Umbar, but he found the naval base to be inadequate and commissioned a separate military harbour on the eastern side of Tol Cirya. Little of this project had actually been executed by 1404, when Castamir resumed work on it. Until then the Southern Division had used the commercial harbours—both in Umbar and by Vinyamar.

The first order of business was to replace the old harbour wall with a new one that would encompass both basins. It was to be fifty feet high and thirty feet thick, and would share the same design as the city walls—ten D-shaped towers and two small postern gates. By 1441, the new harbour wall is complete only to its fourth tower, the remaining sections rising only twenty feet.

With the exception of its tower, Tol Cirya remains quite empty. A wall has been planned for the island itself, but is only partially complete, as are the galley dry-docks, which have yet to be roofed. Numerous support buildings for the military harbour—quarters, storage and workshops—have also been planned; only the wharfs have been completed.

The wharf along the length of the southern harbour of Umbar is made of stone, as are several of the piers. The harbour is deep and most ships are able to dock by either the wharf or the piers. Numerous warehouses line the wharf, behind which lie the infamous harbour quarters, consisting of run-down blocks that accommodate sailors, poor artisans, a few inns and numerous bars. This area can be dangerous (naval crews in particular are known for their unruly behaviour), and anything can happen there after dark. The Watch never patrols the harbour quarters in groups of less than four.

A large number of wooden jetties with warehouses line the northern harbour, where the majority of ships are moored. Ships too large for these jetties are anchored along the southern rim of the basin and are served by small boats. Because the basin itself is shallow, the largest ships cannot use it; the buildup of silt requires that the entrance be dredged regularly.

4.3 CITY AUTHORITIES

The city of Umbar is the administrative seat for its territory, which is under the authority of a military governor appointed by the King. One of the primary tasks of Umbar's governor is to maintain political relations with Haradwaith, a responsibility that necessitates a large staff of emissaries, diplomats, advisers, and an extensive network of informants on Southron matters.

Umbar was governed by an Othir during the first century of Gondorian rule, but Hyarmendacil's establishment of a territorial administration in 1050 gave it self-governance through an elective council. These privileges were later extended under the reigns of Atanatar II and Calmacil, and have since reached a par with most of Gondor's other cities.

The civil affairs of Umbar are managed by a Grand Council, whose seventy-two members are elected by the most politically important guilds of the city. These guilds are divided into major, minor and artisan groups for purposes of representation. The five richest and most prominent guilds—the goldsmiths, shipwrights, captains, and silk and spice-traders—appoint four councillors each, while the eight minor and fourteen artisan guilds elect three and two councillors each respectively.

There are also several other, smaller councils. They handle special matters such as the southern harbour, the northern harbour taxes, etc.

A special electorate council of twenty-one members, who are themselves elected by the guilds, appoints city officials (with the exception of the squire, who is appointed by the King from among six candidates nominated by the electorate council). The major guilds jointly appoint eight members, the minor guilds seven, and the artisan guilds six. All council appointments are annual, but re-elections are very common.

The most important civic official in Umbar is the squire, who heads the city's administration and acts as chairman of the Grand Council. He is also president of the city court, in which capacity he is assisted by four judges (two appointed by the electorate council and two by the citizenry). Other important city officials include the treasurer, the harbour-masters, and the captain of the Watch, all of whom are elected annually, just as with the council. Some offices, such as membership in the city Watch, are not full-time occupations.

Even though Vinyamar is a separate town, it is governed from Umbar—the council of Vinyamar, which handles local affairs, is appointed by the electorate council.

The privileged status of Tol Cirya and the naval harbour, which lie outside the jurisdiction of Umbar, is a regular source of conflict between the city authorities and the naval command. The inability of the city Watch to take action against the unruly behaviour of navy personnel on shore leave is a prime example of this.

4.3.1 THE MILITARY PRESENCE

The territory of Umbar has a large military establishment to protect it from Southron raids. Its governor is capable of fielding 9000 Gondorian foot soldiers and 600 Southron mercenary cavalry, more than two-thirds of which are stationed in strongholds between the Cuiviërant and the Cape of Squids. Those stationed between the Harnen and the Cuiviërant garrison Dûsalan, Eithel Angir, Ardûmir, and five small forts.

The city of Umbar has a garrison of 1500 line infantry, 600 Anfalas archers and 200 Southron horsemen. Six hundred of the foot soldiers are stationed within the city. Another 400 are stationed in Vinyamar. The rest are based in a fortress built beside the crossroad of the Hyarmen and the Rath Khand. This garrison mounts a guard at the gates, towers, and walls of the city and harbour.

The city's havens serves as a major base for the Southern Division of Gondor's navy, which is responsible for patrolling the coasts south of Harnen; however, only a few ships of the Southern Division are typically in the havens at any one point. In addition to their ship duty, 600 marines garrison the fortifications of Tol Cirya, Tar-Calion and Tiras Harn.

4.4 THE INHABITANTS

(POPULATION: 30,000)

The population of the city amounts to some 24,000 persons while Vinyamar has some 6,000 inhabitants. The majority of Umbar's citizens are of Númenórean descent. They tend to be slightly more chauvinistic than their northern counterparts, but are otherwise indistinguishable from the Dúnadan settlers from the Anduin valley, who make up the second largest segment of the city's inhabitants. The remainder of the population is largely Southron, though the city's role as a nexus of trade routes brings with it a variety of visitors from most mannish realms of western and southern Endor.

The people of Umbar support the Usurper to a man. This allegiance is due to the prevalent ethnocentricity of most of its inhabitants, the importance of the sea-trade, and the economic upswing caused by Castamir's large building projects on Tol Cirya.

4.4.1 THE ELITE

Many prominent families of Umbar—including almost all of the nobility—possess pure Dúnadan ancestry, whether of Faithful or King's Men extraction. (Intermarriage is quite common at the time of the Kin-strife). A distinguished naval career can often lead to a landed knighthood in the territory, both for commoners and for the sons of noble families. These combined factors have closely tied the nobility to both the naval establishment and the traditionalist cause. Most landed nobles from Marös or the larger peninsula own city residences, though how much time they spend in Umbar varies considerably from person to person. (Some are deeply involved in trade enterprises, while others concentrate on their estates.)

4.4.2 THE GUILDS

The Umbar and Vinyamar are home to a large number of guilds, twenty-seven of which hold elective power (see Section 4.3). The guilds jealously guard their privileges and prerogatives, and those that control the Grand Council are able to use the city Watch to enforce their will. Anyone desiring to take up a profession in Umbar or Vinyamar must first have been admitted into the corresponding guild; however, those who dare may sometimes set up shop in the harbour quarters without too much interference.

Much of Umbar's social life centers upon the council-represented guilds, whose meetings (often carried out in the town hall; see Section 4.2.3) regularly treat with questions of city politics beyond the individual guild's "professional" affairs. Journeymen may participate in most discussions, but apprentices are usually excluded.

4.4.3 THE COMMONERS

Although all manner of professions are represented among its common people, the prosperity of the city and haven of Umbar and its high standard of living derives from trade and the occupations that support it. In general, the wealthy live inside the first wall, while the majority reside within the second; small shop-keepers and the artisan class live in the western half of the city, the proletariat (e.g., drivers, carriers, and sailors) live in the eastern half. Most commoners take an interest in larger matters concerning Umbar and Haradwaith, despite their exclusion from political life.

Members of the upper class tend to live in Umbar, rather than Vinyarnar. The middle class and the better-off artisans live within the first wall while poorer people live between the first and the second wall. Some areas between the walls have bad reputations—the eastern and north-eastern sections, for example, are known for their rowdiness.

4.4.4 PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS

GOVERNOR TELEMNAR (1363-1486)

Telemnar is the military governor of Umbar's territory, and has served in that office since his appointment by Castamir in 1438. Telemnar is also father-in-law to the Usurper through his daughter's marriage. Originally from a naval family with large estates in northwestern Harondor, Telemnar rose swiftly through several posts of command until he was transferred to Castamir's staff in Pelargir, where he served in various important positions. He became a leader in the traditionalist confederacy and a trusted adviser to Castamir during the war.

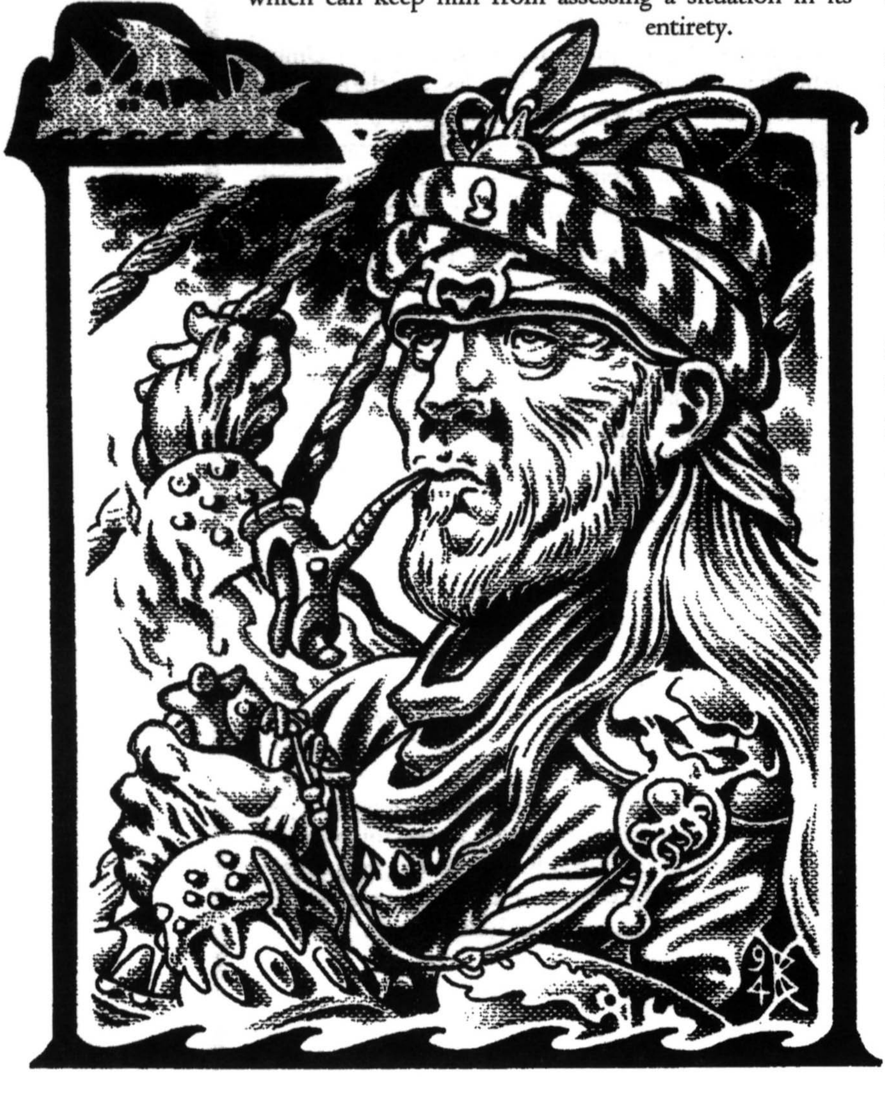
Telemnar is rather old, but still tall and good-looking, with greying hair and steel-coloured eyes. Daily exercize keeps him fit. His demeanour is haughty and he is impeccably dressed, as befits his high station, but he is also given to complaining when things do not work out as he expects. This trait has become more pronounced of late, since he has been refused the resources for a greater landward effort in Haradwaith; the forces he feels entitled to would come at the expense of the fleet—a stance that has led to rumours of a split with the King.

SQUIRE GORDACAR (1352-1504)

Gordacar is the squire of the city and haven of Umbar, and a prominent member of the Shipwrights' guild, with many lucrative investments in trading enterprises. He has been a member of both the Grand and electorate councils for a long time, and has served as squire for three consecutive terms since 1438. Gordacar's grandfather came to Umbar from Lond Ernil, and numerous relatives in Belfalas and Lebennin afford Gordacar contacts in most of Gondor's ports.

His family has since acquired prominence in Umbarian society, and Gordacar is considered to be a very good administrator, though he sometimes has trouble putting things in perspective. His scrupulous attention to every detail of his craft has earned him a reputation as the best shipbuilder in southern Gondor.

Gordacar is rather fat, of medium height, and fond of clothes in bright colours. His otherwise good-looking face is slightly spoiled by a heavy moustache (betraying his less than pure lineage). Although good-natured, likable and very popular in Umbar, Gordacar is not perfect; his major character flaw is an overriding obsession for detail which can keep him from assessing a situation in its entirety.



Lord-captain Menelmir

COMMANDER MARMEDON (1365-1531)

Marmedon has faithfully commanded Umbar's city garrison since 1433 and has spent the greater part of his military career in the territory of Umbar, where he has become one of Gondor's foremost experts in desert warfare.

His loyalty to the Usurper is indifferent, originating principally in the fact that his military unit happened to be stationed in a traditionalist area. Marmedon's lack of professed political commitment has attracted the suspicion of his confederate superiors; since no disloyalty could be proven, he has merely been removed to the less politically sensitive region of Umbar but allowed to retain his rank.

Marmedon is an exemplary soldier: brave, obedient to orders, and possessed of a satisfactory (though not large) share of initiative. Marmedon came from a minor noble family of western Anfalas and enlisted in the military at a very early age. His military mindset can create problems with city authorities, who dislike (and often disregard) his predictably military solutions to civilian problems. Their "insubordination" to his commands leaves Marmedon uneasy.

Marmedon is rather short and muscular. His face is distorted with several old cuts and scars (including a prominent one on his left cheek), giving him a permanent, sardonic smile. Marmedon has few connections with and little knowledge of civilian life. His few friends—all soldiers—find him a sociable person. But Marmedon has lately begun to express some dissatisfaction, feeling that his career has come to a halt for reasons he cannot fathom.

ALACATAR (1311 -1510)

Alcatar is a descendant of Varmacil, lord of Isigir (see Section 4.1.1). Following family tradition, Alcatar made a naval career for himself, before retiring to Isigir in 1421. As a naval officer, he is a staunch supporter of Castamir, but refrains from unnecessary involvement in the politics of the Kin-strife.

Alcatar is a tall man of pure Dúnadan blood. He has retained his vigour in his old age and shows few signs of weakening. He comes from a distinguished Lebennin family, whose sea-crest he bears upon his surcoat.

CAPTAIN MARDIL (1417-1564)

Mardil is the recently elected captain of the Watch, a position for which he has displayed enthusiasm, good sense, and initiative, despite his lack of experience. Mardil belongs to an old military family from Ithilien that moved to Umbar during the reign of Ciryandil, and he more or less inherited his current post from his father, who served as Watch captain for more than twenty years. Conditions in the harbour quarters have entangled Mardil in a major conflict with the naval authorities, and his actions regularly infuriate Menelmir.

Mardil is slightly above medium height, muscular and very good-looking (several girls of the prominent families try to woo him). His close-cropped hair is black and his eyes are grey as the sea. He is usually dressed in uniform, but when off-duty, he prefers a relaxed style. He is a polite man, though stubborn. Mardil's inexperience results in a tendency to enlarge the importance of his own actions—he reckons the arrest of a petty thief, for instance, as a major breakthrough in the struggle against crime.

Lord-captain Menelmir (1271-1493)

Menelmir is Lord-captain of the Southern Division of the Gondorian fleet, which places him third in the naval hierarchy after the Captain of Ships and the Lord-captain of the Main Fleet. Menelmir belongs to one of the oldest and most prominent families of Lebennin and has been a close associate of Castamir's for many decades. Menelmir is also an experienced ship commander and has led several expeditions to southern waters.

Despite his military excellence, Menelmir is not loved among his subordinates. He is petty-minded and rather niggardly, and his extreme traditionalist opinions cause him to see loyalists in every forecastle, leading him to purge his unit of suspects periodically. His subordinates have become jumpy and overly cautious when working with him.

Menelmir regularly argues with Telemnar over the allocation of resources for Gondorian hegemony on the sea and in Haradwaith, while jealousy for his naval prerogatives leads the civilian authorities to contest the proper relations between the navy and the city. His strained relations with the governor and city administration contrast with the great influence Menelmir wields with the King, a fact which has led the wise politician to court his good favor.

Menelmir is tall with fair hair and blue eyes. He prefers to be dressed in an austere way, though always in such a manner that his high status is obvious. He is pleasant with his political friends, but makes a mighty and dangerous enemy to those who cross him.

Eätor (1413-1568)

Eätor is aid and secretary for the Lord-captain Menelmir in Umbar. He is an outspoken traditionalist like his superior officer, but much of his chauvinism stems less from genuine conviction than from the cover it provides for Eätor's avaricious nature. Unlike Menelmir, Eätor does not come from a respected family of leisure, and the zeal with which he pursues his calling stems rather from his greed for prestige and power over others.

Eätor is heavily involved in Menelmir's "sea faction" and takes a great interest in its emerging connections with court intrigue in Pelargir (see Section 4.6.2), which he hopes to use for his own political advancement. In Umbar, Eätor is Menelmir's frontman for dealing with the civil authorities, which makes him a well-known and generally disliked personality in the naval hierarchy (within which he wields considerably less actual power than he would like). Eätor is an opportunist and is constantly hatching schemes to endear himself to Menelmir.

Eätor is a physically unimposing man, a fact for which his inflated sense of self-importance more than compensates. He is slim and of medium height, with black hair and brown eyes. In public, he appears in naval uniform that displays his rank and status, and is unlikely to communicate with anyone who fails to treat him with the proper respect. Eätor is annoyingly deferential to superiors, especially those he dislikes. He is a flexible man, whose behaviour ranges from the suave to the stern, depending upon the situation.

Sirandir (1350-1501)

The Côr Aran is led by Sirandir. He is not among the foremost in the organisation, since Umbar is regarded as a staunch traditionalist city needing less attention from the Crows. Sirandir comes from the territory and has a military background. Accordingly, he is concerned about the Gondorian politics in Harad and has allied himself to Telemnar.

Sirandir is a secretive person, a trait encouraged by his work in the Côr Aran. His secrecy has caused a major rift in the organisation, since Sirandir reveals only the minimum to his subordinates. His second in command, Rendor, has taken special exception to this treatment. In addition to this complaint, personal differences between the two have led them to cease speaking to one another.

Sirandir is tall, even for a person of Númenórean descent, towering a head taller than most others. He is also heavily built and gives an impression of being massive, physically dominating everyone around him. His hair is dark and he sports large sideburns.

Zimrakhil and Belphegor

In his public role as ambassador to Gondor from the Southern Confederacy, Zimrakhil is highly visible within elite circles in the haven. He professes a diplomatic neutrality in most matters, but is vociferous in his support of Telemnar's landward interests. Zimrakhil is accessible to visitors, so long as they have some kind of official reason for seeking audience with him. His brother Belphegor, acting as protector and bodyguard, is rarely absent from Zimrakhil's side. (See Section 2.33 for more information.)

4.5 CLANDESTINE GROUPS

4.5.1 THE LOYALISTS

The territory and city of Umbar support Castamir to a man, and loyalist influence is negligible. Most of those who openly supported Eldacar departed for Osgiliath in 1432, and the few that remained after the war either fled or were captured by the newly formed Côr Aran.

Signs of loyalist sentiment have reappeared in recent years, however. These propaganda sheets and scurrilous ballads that appeared mysteriously in the middle of the night were initially considered to be youthful pranks, but their persistence eventually led to a local Côr Aran reaction, which culminated in a series of house-to-house searches. These were discontinued, however, when the Crows realized that the forced searches lost them more support among the populace than the propaganda had done.

Menelmir has been very upset about the thought of a loyalist presence in Umbar, and the propaganda has given him cause for several purges within the fleet. Many officers and sailors have been dishonourably discharged because of accusations of loyalist sympathies, but most have endured their fate in silence, knowing the power of Menelmir. A few persist in defending their innocence.

4.5.2 SOUTHRON SPIES

The Haradwaith is affected by events in Gondor in general and Umbar in particular. However, the local chieftains have no organized intelligence operations, being rather unsophisticated and fatalistic. The well-organized city of Bozisha-Dar is in a different position. The main concern of its seven Regents is the safe and unhindered flow of commodities to and from Gondor, and the severe disturbance of trade generated by the Kin-strife has caused a lot of worry (see Section 2.26).

The Regents' main source of intelligence consists of reports from sailors visiting Umbar, who keep their eyes and ears open without resorting to clandestine methods. The Regents also employ a few persons living in Umbar who are expressly discouraged from using violent or criminal methods that might attract the ire of the city authorities. (Less prudent behaviour, however, may be employed against commercial competitors.)

4.5.3 ORGANIZED CRIME

The crime lords of Umbar must always be careful to avoid clashing with the military establishment in the city, for they realize that the Othir and the Lord-captain would never tolerate activities that might threaten Umbar's security. For this reason, gangs have concentrated on smuggling and other non-violent pursuits. (For instance, there is a thriving export of desert drugs to the cities of the Anduin valley.) The gangs actually spend more time fighting each other than the Watch, but Mardil's zealous attitude may soon change things. The crime rate of Umbar does not exceed that of Gondor's other major cities, and petty theft is the most common offence. Brawling and assault is also common to the harbour quarters, as the Watch experiences difficulty controlling naval personnel.

4.5.4 THE TINDÓMË-LIË

The Tindómë-lië (S. Order of the Rising Sun) is a counter-cultural fringe movement ostensibly devoted to the well-being of Umbar and its inhabitants. Its members form a loose association of mystics and artists who indulge in simple rituals and hokum—they drink strong wine, chant silly hymns, and generally have a good time together, while pretending to be very serious. Many of its members entertain unconventional beliefs about the nature of Man and the world, and it is common for pacifist or anti-authoritarian opinions to be expressed through their activities (a fact which has led the city authorities and the Côr Aran to view them with disapproval and suspicion).

Although esoteric in its orientation, the Tindómë-lië is not particularly secret. This "Order" lacks any formal structure or hierarchy, and new memberships are encouraged for the sake of meeting interesting people. Despite the occult pretensions of the Tindómë-lië, few of its members actually possess any real powers and none can lay claim to any kind of formal magical training.

4.5.5 CÔR ARAN

The Côr Aran establishment in Umbar is quite small, since the city is known as a traditionalist stronghold. The number of loyalists was always small, and by the time Castamir ascended the throne all of them had fled or been captured. Even so the Côr Aran monitors the events and people in the city. Its main concern at the moment, however, is not the presence of any possible loyalists, but the possible underground activities by Haradan powers.

As in most other official organisations in Umbar, there is a split within the Crows between those advocating further growth of the fleet and of Gondorian involvement along the southern coasts, and those who want to combat the growing power against Gondorian influence in Harad. The head, Sirandir, is a close ally of Telemnar, while his second in command, Rendor, supports Marmedon. The two are hardly on speaking terms and the rest of the Crows are equally divided. As a result, there are in effect two information organisations which spend most of their time surveying each other.

The work of the Crows is not noticed in Umbar, except when they instituted the house-to-house search in 1440 looking for alleged loyalists. Because of popular outcry the operation was closed down as fast as possible. There is still much concern among civilian and military authorities about the negative effects of the search.

4.6 ADVENTURE: BETWEEN LAND AND SEA

Situated at the confluence of both landward and seaborne trade, Umbar is a city whose prosperity depends on propserous and unfettered mercantile enterprise. Although matters of economic policy are handled by the Grand Council of guilds, the guarantee of security to Umbar's commercial arteries ultimately rests with the military and financial resources of the King in Pelargir. Courting royal favour to back one's agenda is a major administrative preoccupation, and competing visions of Umbar's future serve to draw the lines of division among the powerful of the haven.

4.6.1 A TALE OF TRADE AND TIDINGS

The severe wartime disturbance of trade with the Raj is of major concern to Umbar's guilds. This, however, has not shaken their traditionalist stance; instead, they hope that Castamir's reign will eventually bring them extra advantages (perhaps through royal support for a tougher attitude towards the Southrons). Several merchants who previously made big profits from this trade have long sought to influence Castamir to adopt policies that will increase the flow of commodities from the south, and would definitely approve of occasional military support in their dealings with the Raj (something neither Valacar nor Eldacar would ever have contemplated). With the conclusion of the Kin-strife in 1437, two men decided to take action to realize this goal.

Gordacar won his first nomination to the squireship of Umbar as a result of a daring proposal he made to the Grand Council in 1438: its member guilds would jointly finance a long-term maritime venture into the south, whose primary purpose would be to gather reliable news of the situation in the Raj and elsewhere that could be used to win the Usurper's support for the Council's economic agenda. Council members were impressed not only by the logic of Gordacar's plan, but also by the scale of its execution. And Gordacar, the greatest living shipwright in Gondor, had constructed a vessel worthy of the grandeur of its mission: the Nenduhir.

Three times the size of any merchant vessel of Gondor, the Nenduhir was born in the mind of Captain Kunbeshu, a prominent member of the Shipping guild. Kunbeshu claimed to have found the inspiration for his leviathan in a vision, which he supposedly received from a mysterious water-spirit that gave the vessel its name. Whatever the truth of this rumour, the Nenduhir's construction required highly unconventional building techniques—even for its craftsman, Gordacar.

Captain Kunbeshu and the future squire of Umbar commenced building late in 1437, soon after the siege of Osgiliath, and continued work well into the next year. The result was a vessel that could bear a crew of nearly two hundred men for up to three months at sea without respite. The Nenduhir would carry in hold a substantial cargo of goods from all of Umbar's major export guilds with which to explore new spheres of commerce in the unknown reaches of the far South; its captain would be authorized by charter to act in the name of the Council in establishing rates of exchange and treaties with foreign powers. The Nenduhir left haven on the day that Gordacar was confirmed in his new office by the King, but Captain Kunbeshu was not to be seen in Umbar until three long years had passed.

Rumour of Kunbeshu's imminent return came to Umbar early in 1441, when messages arrived by land that the Nenduhir was taking haven at Bozisha-Dar and was preparing for its voyage home. Anxious anticipation troubled the hearts of the Council—and of the governor and lord-captain of Umbar, who had realized what influence Kunbeshu's findings in the South could have on their policies. In time, the tall masts of the Nenduhir were sighted from the headland of the haven, and a special gathering of the Council was convened, the first to hear Kunbeshu's report.

Others, too, would be present at that historic council meeting; the growing conflict between Telemnar and Menelmir's land and sea factions in Umbar had by then reached Pelargir, where the King's policy in Umbar became entangled with other conflicts among the new royal family and its supporters. Queen Mûrabêth's attempt to supplant Lord Morlaen's influence in the royal court rested upon the prestige of her father Telemnar, and those who supported Telemnar's landward policies turned to the queen for patronage and material aid.

Morlaen matched this tactic by compelling his own supporters in Lebennin and Lamedon to fund Lord-captain Menelmir and his sea faction in Umbar, though few of these allies had any genuine interest in the disposition of royal finance in Umbar. Although they began as separate matters, therefore, the factional strife in Umbar and Pelargir have become inextricably connected for political reasons. Each camp sends its own representatives (whether officially or unofficially) to hear Captain Kunbeshu's tale and decide what implications it will have for their respective causes.

The most important representative is Daeron, who has Castamir's authority to adjudicate the distribution of royal funds for the following year in accordance with his opinion of Captain Kunbeshu's information. Menelmir feels certain that Daeron will pronounce judgment in his favour, since the Lord-captain believes he and the King have an understanding on this matter. What no one in Umbar knows is that Daeron intends to tip the balance in favor of Telemnar's land faction, because of his secret allegiance to Queen Mûrabêth.

4.6.2 NPCS

Captain Kunbeshu (1412-1502)

Kunbeshu is captain of the Nenduhir, the largest merchant vessel to fly the Gondorian flag, and an influential member of Umbar's Guild of Captains. His long-time friendship with Squire Gordacar has gained him stature in the community rarely afforded a man born of mixed Southron and Dúnadan blood; news of his imminent return is likely to greatly increase his renown.

Little is known of his past, since his life is his ship and his ship reveals no secrets. Kunbeshu's career, however, is marked by instances of ambition and brutality, not the least of which was his mutiny, as a sailor, against his loyalist captain during an important sea battle off the coast of Anfalas in 1435. Upon seizing the ship, he led his new prize into many raids against pockets of loyalist resistance.

Ironically, the methods of his quick rise to power have led many of the military elite to suspect his proclaimed loyalty to the Usurper. This distrust has been his downfall in political circles and was his reason for seeking a mercantile command over a military one. His crew is fanatically loyal, which appeases Kunbeshu's obvious paranoia.

Kunbeshu is forbiddingly tall and overweight. He is tanned dark, with a handsome but disarming face that is grimaced by the fury of the sea. His black top-knotted hair reveals his Southron heritage, as does his taste in dress. He is flamboyant in a brutish way, with an ego and poise appropriate to a captain. He seems to lack any need for companionship, although rumours are he wears a locket bearing the likeness of a sultry young woman.

Merul

Merul is a merchant who acts as the official clandestine agent for the Regents of Bozisha-Dar, where he has many connections as a result of his southward trade enterprises. He accompanied the Nenduhir on its great southward voyage because Captain Kunbeshu needed a companion vessel capable of navigating river mouths and shallow firths his own ship could not reach. Merul decided to join Kunbeshu once again on his return voyage to Umbar, in order to establish contacts in the administrative and commercial spheres. His intention is to promote goodwill between Gondor and Bozisha-Dar and to avoid the realization of Menelmir's designs on the Raj. (See Section 4.5.2 for more information.)

Squire Gordacar

Gordacar stands to gain in every way by Kunbeshu's return to Umbar. The Nenduhir's successful completion of its epic voyage is likely to elevate Gordacar's shipbuilding prowess to legendary status, and the Council's satisfaction with an investment well-spent will all but guarantee Gordacar's next term of office—if not the next three terms. Finally, the substantial wealth in exotic commodities returning with the Nenduhir will keep the squire's pockets lined for many years to come. Beyond the many benefits accruing to him from the Nenduhir's return, Gordacar is glad for the safe return of a close friend.

The squire's disposition towards the land and sea faction struggle is ambivalent. As a shipwright and a merchant, Gordacar favours the extension of resources for a southward naval expedition, but as the head of Umbar's civil administration, the squire is uneasy with the thought of further royal encouragement to Lord-captain Menelmir and his often disruptive underlings. This fact does not, however, dispose Gordacar to the opposing faction, since Telemnar's governorship has little direct impact on his own jurisdiction, bounded as it is by the city walls. (See Section 4.4.4 for more information.)

Lord-captain Menelmir

Menelmir views Kunbeshu's return to Umbar with a favourable eye, since it bodes well for his hopes for a military expedition against the Storm King. The Lord-captain is indifferent towards the imminent strengthening of Gordacar's position in Umbar, since the civil administration is less a rival than an annoyance to the naval establishment so long as Castamir remains Captain of Ships in Pelargir.

On the other hand, Menelmir regards the entanglement of his quarrels in Umbar with royal politics in Pelargir as potentially disruptive to the stability of his influence with the King, since it makes him more dependent upon others in Gondor who share little understanding or conviction about the needs of the Southern Division. Despite his trust in Lord Morlaen, Menelmir realizes that embroiling himself in the affairs of the King's uncle could create more enemies than he desires and, in any case, makes him vulnerable to unwanted political contingencies beyond his control. The bright side of the upcoming council meeting, as Menelmir sees it, will lie in its being a convenient opportunity to size up his opposition among the representatives that arrive from Gondor. (See Section 4.4.4 for more information.)

Eätor

Eätor will take great interest in everything Captain Kunbeshu has to say, eagerly hanging on any point that might be used to bolster Menelmir's cause. (It is he who will write up the report of the council meeting to the King.). Eätor is himself too caught up in the intricacies of political divisions in the royal court to worry much about the content of the sea faction's position (though he will take care that Menelmir's wishes are couched in the appropriate diplomatic form). He will never take an opposing viewpoint to his Lord-captain in public.

Eätor is a conspiracy theorist and will suspect hidden intentions and plots behind anyone at the council meeting who does not immediately support his Lord-captain's agenda. As far as he is concerned, any representative coming from Pelargir will be considered an enemy unless

proven a friend. Those with whom he is not familiar may even be spied upon at his bidding, especially if they oppose Menelmir publicly, though Eätor will take no violent action against them unless explicitly ordered to do so by his superior. (See Section 4.4.4 for more information.)

GOVERNOR TELEMNAR

Telemnar knows that Kunbeshu's return will be a boon to his opponents in Umbar and abroad, but he also recognizes its value as an occasion to establish or renew contact with potential allies from Gondor, many of whom he has never met. With these, he hopes to forge an effective strategy for uniting the concrete interests of his daughter's faction in court with his long-term goal of eradicating the dark forces he believes to be at work in the Harad.

The governor is well aware of the threat which the Army of the Southern Dragon poses to the Raj and its neighbouring realms, but he is also perceptive enough to recognize how the spectre of the Storm King could be enlarged in the minds of the Dúnedain to create a false pretext for Menelmir and Castamir's ambitions upon the wealth of the Raj. Telemnar seeks to oppose this tendency out of genuine conviction (with which his own self-interest is necessarily bound up), though he does not realize that the threat of evil influence in the Harad is itself largely a deception calculated to solidify the power of the real Enemy.

COMMANDER MARMEDON

Marmedon has his own views on the relative importance of maritime and landward expenditure in Umbar, but he is a soldier—not a policy-maker—and so will confine his remarks on the matter to "professional advice" concerning his area of expertise: desert warfare. He would, of course, welcome the prospect of increased military resources for the execution of his duties as garrison commander, but will mind his own business unless pressed by a superior to disclose his private opinions.

Given his tendency to political indifference, Marmedon is even less interested in the repercussions of the land and sea faction conflict in Pelargir—that is the King's affair. Being a military man, Marmedon will, of course, be highly interested in learning anything from Kunbeshu concerning the Army of the Southern Dragon and of the size and composition of the Storm King's forces in general.

His keen mind will quickly see through Menelmir's admonitions about the threat the Storm King poses to Gondor. With accurate information in hand, even a poor strategist would recognize that the Southern Dragon poses no threat, given the nearly impassable landward barrier of the Great Desert on the one hand and the Southron Confederacy's defense of ways into Near Harad on the other. Marmedon will reassure Telemnar of this fact, but will not volunteer this view to anyone else unless pressed or instructed to do so by the governor. (See Section 4.4.4 for more information.)

ZIMRAKHIL

Zimrakhil is inwardly unconcerned about the outcome of the council meeting, since he is in truth an integral part of the threat posed by the Storm King and the "dark forces" at work in Near Harad. Publicly, however, the honey-tongued prophet will present himself as a concerned but otherwise neutral diplomat. Zimrakhil will speak on behalf of the Southron Confederacy if asked, but will avoid openly opposing its interests in the Harad to those touted by Menelmir.

If given the opportunity, Zimrakhil will attempt to link the dark cults against which his confederacy struggles to the machinations of the Storm King (thus diverting attention from Adûnaphel's presence while at the same time offering a counterpoint to Menelmir's insistence on a naval expedition against the Southern Dragon). The Lord-captain will ridicule such notions, since they detract from the exclusivity of his argument, and Zimrakhil will be amused by this behaviour. (See Section 4.4.4 for more information.)

DAERON

As the King's chosen representative, Daeron possesses great power to influence the outcome of the land and sea faction conflict in Umbar, all the more so given that his secret loyalty to Mûrabêth has already determined his verdict. Believing Daeron to be under his thumb, the Usurper has temporarily granted him prerogative to decree and oversee the disposition of royal revenues to the naval and landed military establishments in the haven and territory of Umbar.

Although his judgement on this matter is predetermined, Daeron must still present a cogent case for his decision; hence, he will thoroughly investigate the issues raised by Captain Kunbeshu's report. Daeron will be independently convinced of Telemnar's position, though he will maintain a mask of neutrality throughout the process. Daeron is himself quite interested in ascertaining the strength and extent of the opposition to Telemnar (and, hence, Mûrabêth) in Umbar and will make full use of his newly-won mandate to learn as much as he is able. (See Section 3.4.4 for more information.)

LORD DURANIL

Although Duranil is the son of Governor Elendin of Harondor (a committed land faction supporter), the warden of Tolfalas comes to Umbar as the advocate of his uncle, Lord Morlaen. This is due not to any factional allegiance, but because of Duranil's involvement with the illicit trade which the Ethir-outlaws funnel from Pelargir to Umbar along with the contributions Morlaen's supporters make to Menelmir's faction (see Section 3.5.4). Morlaen trusts Duranil precisely because he alone of the royal family holds no ambitions in the political struggle that is being waged, but Morlaen is unaware of Duranil's involvement in the Ethir contraband trade.

Duranil profits from the smuggling trade between Lebennin and Umbar, because the strategic location of Tolfalas ideally positions him as a middle-man. Duranil professes support for Menelmir's faction, but this is because the "donations" sent from Morlaen by way of Lannaigh's outlaws afford a cover for his own illegal activities—should they ever stop, so too would his profits. Moreover, discovery of the connection between the outlaws and the Straight Man of Pelargir could lead to exposure of his own activities.

As a result of the precariousness of his situation, the warden's support for the sea faction is really support for the status quo of the conflict itself, rather than for genuine resolution in favour of one party or the other. Ironically, then, Duranil will secretly welcome Daeron's judgement in favour of Telemnar, and may take measures to insure a continued balance of power between the contending factions. If he learns that Neithan is performing a similar role in transferring funds to Umbar on behalf of the queen, Duranil may offer some kind of support for Neithan's ships on Tolfalas (thus, further complicating his position). (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

Captain Neithan

Neithan has two reasons for being in Umbar. The first is to deliver a donation from Mûrabêth's supporters in Lebennin to Telemnar, her father. The second is to cause trouble for the Ethir-outlaws by hiring Lannaigh's former rival, Captain Rastarin, and her mercenary friends, as an "auxiliary" police force in the Ethir. Because of the free reign given to Lannaigh by the Usurper, Neithan has been relatively powerless to act effectively as Ethir-captain.

Neithan's association with the queen began when he impounded one of the Ethir-outlaws, who had attempted to plunder one of the ships bearing Mûrabêth's "gift" to her father in Umbar. The outlaw's release on a slight legality further alienated Neithan from his official role as Ethir-captain and led the queen to recognize the mutual benefit they might render each other given that their problems were embedded in the same political struggle.

Mûrabêth encouraged Neithan to go to Umbar and seek her father's assistance in gaining the resources to counterbalance Lannaigh's power in the Ethir; he brought the queen's donation with him. Telemnar was pleased with the young Ethir-captain and suggested that he might better oppose Lannaigh by turning upon him his own bitterest enemy, Rastarin—while Neithan's office forbade him to take Lannaigh's life, a former rival who was not a subject of Gondor might do so with impunity.

Neithan also intends to hear Kunbeshu's report of his voyages, since he rightly perceives that the occasion will bring the opposition against his newfound royal patron out into the open, where he can see them and evaluate their relative strength. He himself is too alienated from Gondorian politics to care much about the content of the debate, but will be present at the Council as a guest of Governor Telemnar. (See Section 2.3.3 for more information.)

Colfen

Colfen has accompanied Neithan to Umbar as his subordinate officer, and will attend to the bulk of the negotiations with Rastarin and her followers. He is uninterested in the outcome of Kunbeshu's report, since his own loyalties lie elsewhere, but his presence in Umbar will draw the attention of Zimrakhil, who has had dealings with the cult of Benish Armon in the past (see Section 2.3.3). At some point during his stay in Umbar, Colfen will be approached (discreetly) by the prophet and enjoined to put a stop to the dangerous behavior of his half-brother, Ulbar (see Section 4.8). This will entail spending a good deal of time dealing with the leaders of the Ethir-folk in Umbar, so it is unlikely that Colfen will attend the Grand Council. (See Section 2.3.3 for more information.)

Captain Rastarin

Rastarin will politely decline Telemnar's invitation to the Council. She enjoys hearing a good tale, but formal settings are stifling to her spirit, and she would much prefer to engage the infamous Kunbeshu over a mug of ale in one of Umbar's fine drinking establishments (a wish she is likely to get, given Kunbeshu's equal fondness for taverns). She is concerned about how her employer the governor fares as a result of the Council, but this concern has nothing to do with the real issues at stake. (As a former pirate, Rastarin experiences no moral difficulty in conceiving of a raid against some far away land for profit.) (See Section 5.8.2 for more information.)

4.6.3 THE SETTINGS

The Grand Council will take place in Umbar's Town Hall (see Section 4.2.3). Informal meetings with friends and allies will occur wherever the parties in question are residing. Following the Council, Captain Kunbeshu will invite all in attendance to a visit aboard his ship, where a feast will be held. The Nenduhir will be anchored off of the Shipwrights' Guild dock.

4.6.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to meet some of the key figures in the land and sea faction struggle in Umbar, and perhaps to influence debate on the matter. By the end of the adventure, the player characters should have a grasp of the driving issues behind the conflict and the motives underlying the opposing positions, such that they would be able to take sides if they so chose, and to justify their reasons for doing so. The aftermath of Daeron's unexpected decision to support Telemnar is intended to set up Eätor's reaction in the next adventure, "A Stray Word" (see Section 4.7).

Starting the Characters

The principal action of this adventure takes place during the meeting of Umbar's Grand Council, which means that player characters should ideally be in attendance at the session. Normally, the Council is closed to non-members, but given the special nature of the occa-

sion, both the governor and lord-captain have been asked to appear. The easiest way to involve player-characters who are not Council members is therefore to have them be invited by either Telemnar or Menelmir, or to make them representatives from some other important party in Gondor.

The secondary site of action will be Kunbeshu's evening celebrations aboard the Nenduhir following the Council meeting. Invitation to this function is much less exclusive than the Council, yet invitation is still required. Kunbeshu has allowed all of his crew members to invite family or friends from Umbar. Character motivation may range from mere interest in the tale of Kunbeshu's voyage, to active and intentional pursuit of the political intrigues taking place just below the surface of conversation.

AIDS

Acquaintance or friendship with one of the principal players of either faction will be the most valuable tool for getting to the bottom of things. At some level, the drive to acquire knowledge about the conflict entails some degree of personal motivation or self-interest in its outcome (otherwise, Kunbeshu's tale would be just an enjoyable yarn). On the other hand, either of these advantages may end up emerging in the course of the adventure itself.

OBSTACLES

Because of the factional nature of this conflict, too open or close an association with one of the factions will effectively make members of the opposing faction inaccessible to questioning, so a degree of neutrality may have its advantages. On the other hand, not expressing a commitment may just as easily silence those with whom one is talking.

OUTCOMES

The main outcome of Telemnar's initial victory with Daeron will be Eätor's conviction that something must be done to rectify the situation in favor of Lord-captain Menelmir. A report will be sent to Pelargir decrying Daeron's injudicious stewardship of the King's revenues, and Daeron will be forced to defend his position to Castamir (which may or may not be successful). Whatever the upshot, Daeron's decree has been made with royal authority which is unlikely to be rescinded—lest the King appear fickle in his pronouncements to his subjects.

The principal consequence of this will be a noticeable increase in royal funding for landward concerns in Umbar for the next year, unless some new development drastically changes things. Eätor intends to invent just such a development (see Section 4.7).

4.6.5 ENCOUNTERS

THE GRAND COUNCIL

Much of Kunbeshu's address to the Council will be a detailed report of the economic contacts he established over the course of his voyage, but he will devote a good deal of time also to the matter of the Storm King's presence in the Ered Loronar and the Southern Dragon's depredations of neighbouring realms. Kunbeshu is of the opinion that the best way to prevent Akhôrahil from becoming a threat to Gondorian interests would be to strengthen peaceful ties with the Raj and to encourage the Regents of Bozisha-Dar to forge a defensive alliance with the smaller southern realms bordering on the Storm King's sphere of influence.

The various factions assembled will seize upon these words, reaffirming or twisting them to serve their own argument for a landward or seaward emphasis. Kunbeshu himself will remain aloof from the ensuing debates, being content to have delivered his report, though he will make himself available for further questioning. It is unlikely (unless the player characters are able to work political miracles) that the Council will come to any kind of unanimity on the matter and will therefore adjourn for the evening.

KUNBESHU'S FEAST

Many of those attending the Council will appear at the Nenduhir to enjoy Captain Kunbeshu's legendary hospitality. Informal discussion of the Council meeting is likely to continue on board the ship, and characters may exploit this opportunity to better acquaint themselves with some of the movers and shakers of Umbarean politics. At some point in the evening, Kunbeshu will lead a tour of his cyclopean vessel.

4.7 ADVENTURE: A STRAY WORD

It is common knowledge in Umbar that Menelmir seeks a pretext for involving the fleets in a southward naval expedition; one of his well-meaning subordinates aims to invent just such a pretext—without first informing his Lord-captain of the scheme. A mock assassination attempt has been arranged upon Menelmir which, if it "fails" as planned, will link the would-be assailants to the machinations of the Storm King. The author of this scheme has taken great care to see that these plans run smoothly, but even the most seamless of designs may be undone by a single, stray word.

4.7.1 A TALE OF STAGED ASSASSINATION

This plot to bolster the position of Menelmir's faction has its origin in Eätor, friend and trusted aide to the Lord-captain, who shares the latter's ambitions with respect to the extension of Dúnadan might south of Umbar. His intention is to recruit a gang of thugs through an intermediary who will not reveal Eätor's hand in the affair. A time and a place for the mock assassination will be set, but Eätor will position a company of marines about the site in order to intervene at the last moment to "save" the Lord-captain and eliminate the hired thugs.

One of these thugs will have been instructed to bear a letter on his person—containing fictitious orders from Akhôrahil to kill Menelmir—which will be recovered from the body of the dead assailant. The would-be assassin will, of course, be chosen from among the illiterate, lest he himself read it and perceive his employer's intended treachery. Eätor hopes that the letter, backed up by a "realistic" assassination attempt, will convince the Usurper of the wisdom of retaliation against this enemy, thus strengthening the case of Menelmir's faction over against that of the governor.

The success of Eätor's design depends heavily on the immediate deaths of the hired thugs. (Should any of these escape their ambushers, their existence could well threaten disclosure of their employer's identity.) Eätor has instructed his recruiter to give the thugs the impression that the assassination has been ordered by the governor himself or by someone under his authority.

This precaution aims to ensure that Telemnar and his faction fall out of favor with the King, regardless of whether or not the Storm King angle proves successful. As a final precaution, Eätor will himself accompany Menelmir to the scene of the crime, accompanied by two of his aides. (It is generally known that the Lord-captain will participate in a mustering of the garrison in the main square later that day.) Four of the assassins will be quickly cut down, but the fifth, who stayed slightly in the background, will escape through the gate, and an angry Eätor will soon discover to his dismay that the crucial letter is not with any of the four that were killed.

4.7.2 THE NPCS

Rhavas (1412-1490)

Rhavas was to be the chief pawn in Eätor's mock assassination, but his recent brush with death has left him more concerned about his own survival. A Haradan who grew up in a small village in the Annabrith valley southeast of Umbar, Rhavas came to the haven as a youth in order to apprentice himself to a shoemaker of distant kinship. A quarrel with his former master led to the confiscation of his own shoemaking shop in the harbor quarters by the City Watch.

Rhavas is forced to survive on odd jobs, as a courier, stable boy, or guard. During lean times he will also rely on petty thievery. His contacts in the lower strata of the Umbar society have helped him in the past, and now they may prove indispensable for finding a way out of Umbar.

Rhavas is a small, dark-skinned man of typical Southron appearance. When together with friends, he is outgoing and much liked. Originally, he was always that way, but his experiences have made him close-mouthed and somewhat bitter. However, his sunnier disposition will shine through now and then since he cannot hide it all the time. He speaks good Westron and Adûnaic, but cannot read.

Tergon (1412-1526)

Tergon is a native of Umbar who grew up in a small artisan family but had grander plans. He managed to educate himself and obtained a clerical position in the city administration. He is very ambitious and has little regard for loyalty, as long as he earns good silver or is able to further his career. He does, however, have a healthy respect for the power of Menelmir and the navy, resulting from an earlier failed attempt to trick them.

When the local Côr Aran nest was established, he was recruited as an agent. But even Tergon's loyalty to the Côr Aran is not complete; instead, he can be rather liberal in sharing information (provided that suitable payment is forthcoming). He has good connections with the naval staff and occasionally works for the navy as a cover.

Tergon looks as if he had Adûnaic blood in his veins—rather tall with dark hair and brown eyes. He is dressed in the way of the well-to-do city dwellers, though preferably in reddish shades. He is a man of good social skills and deals amiably with anyone, generally concealing his true feelings.

Perion (1402-1456)

Perion is the innkeeper of the Drunken Southron. A retired sailor with many connections among the lower strata of the haven, Perion is a respected mediator and go-between in the harbor quarters and is rumored to lead a gang of thieves.

Perion knows about most things going on in the harbor, but is close-mouthed when he believes that the disclosure of information might threaten his establishment. He is vengeful when slighted, but true to his word, winning respect and trust from even his more shady associates.

Perion is of medium height and muscular, a legacy of the hard life at sea, with brown hair and darker skin than is usual in a Gondorian. He is poorly dressed, as befits his position in society and there is no difference between him and his customers. His behaviour is usually somewhat coarse.

4.7.3 THE SETTINGS

The Drunken Southron Inn

1. Entrance. There are a few pegs on the wall, but it is not recommended to leave anything valuable hanging here.

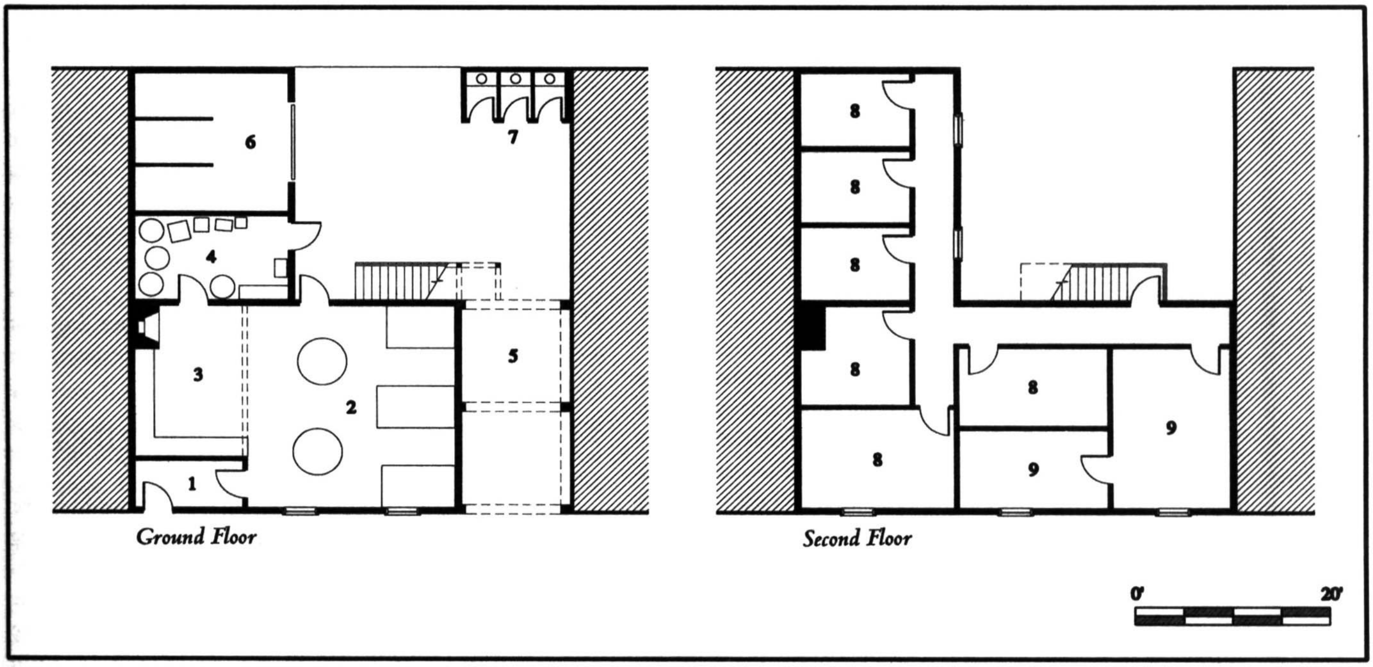
2. Taproom. It is rather shabby with benches and tables of rough-hewn wood. There is no bar counter.

3. Kitchen. It is immediately connected with the taproom without any intervening door.

4. Storeroom.

5. Entrance to the Backyard.

6. Stable. Besides the owner's horse there is space for two more horses.



The Drunken Southron

7. Latrine.

8. Guestroom. They may be rented by the night but also by the hour.

9. Perion's Quarters. The innkeeper's family spends most of its time down in the taproom, generally leaving these private rooms empty.

4.7.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to find out who ordered the assassination attempt (thereby allowing the characters to clear themselves of any suspicion of involvement in the plot). This necessitates locating the surviving assassin, Rhavas, who is still inside the city walls. In the course of their investigation, the characters may well end up making new enemies among the city authorities.

Motives

Late one evening, as the characters sit at a booth in the common room of The Inn by the Gate, their ears perk up at a conversation coming from a neighboring table. The general commotion makes it difficult to hear even one's own voice, but for a brief moment they are able to make out a few words, before the conversation is engulfed once more by the din.

"*Well then, you know the place, the time, and whom to kill. If there should be any problems you can get hold of me through Perion at The Southron.*" The characters have little opportunity to study the five men sitting at that table, who stand up and quit the inn after a few minutes, but they mark the one who spoke to be of Southron appearance.

Two days later, as the characters stroll towards the harbor gates, their paths cross with Menelmir at the very moment of the planned assassination attempt. Rhavas and his companions rush out from the gateway to attack the Lord-captain's party, but are immediately engaged by the hidden marines who burst forth from adjacent streets and alleyways, leaving Menelmir alive and unharmed.

The characters will recognize the fallen assassins as the same five men whom they saw at the inn two days earlier. Later that day, rewards promising ten gold pieces for the location and capture of the fugitive assassin are posted by the city guard, condemning "*the hideous attempt on the life of our beloved Lord-captain Menelmir.*"

On the day following the assassination attempt, some men from the City Watch appear at the characters' residence and bring them to their headquarters for questioning. It will become obvious to the characters that they are under suspicion. Lacking sufficient evidence to arrest them, the officials release the characters after some hard questioning but order them to remain within the city until the assassination attempt has been fully investigated.

Aids

Characters who visit the Drunken Southron may learn from Perion that the man they are looking for is a known criminal named Rhavas, who frequents the harbor quarters. He visited the inn for four days, but has not returned to pay the innkeeper for his room. If the characters agree to compensate for the room, Perion will allow them to examine Rhavas' abandoned belongings: a small saddlebag with a few items of clothing and a letter written in Apysaic.

> *Our master has decided that Menelmir is too great a nuisance and decrees his death. Recruit any assistance necessary for this deed and proceed accordingly. Expenses will be handled through the ordinary channels.*
>
> *—May the eyes of Akhôrahil watch over you.*

Obstacles

The chief obstacle to uncovering Eätor as the author of the assassination plot is time, for the characters' principal lead, Rhavas, intends to leave Umbar with a caravan in three days time. Having escaped with his life, Rhavas' one objective is to flee the haven. He is currently hiding out with a Haradan friend named Kraff, but his preparations for departure necessitate that he come out in the open some of the time, making it possible for characters to locate him.

Outcomes

Freeing themselves from suspicion and exposing the true author of the assassination plot may create as many problems as it solves. While the characters may claim the posted reward if they can bring in the culprits (or at least anyone who seems to be the culprit), both Telemnar and Menelmir's factions will take swift and decisive measures to silence any intimation of their involvement in the affair—including the possibility of an assassination attempt against the meddling characters.

On the other hand, should members of either faction be implicated, their own political opponents may intervene to aid the characters. In any event, the backlash of their investigations will begin following contact with Tergon; he will utilize his naval contacts to make it plain that the characters should cease to investigate the matter. Stubborn characters will continue to be harassed until they are dead or they leave Umbar.

4.7.5 ENCOUNTERS

Talking to Rhavas

Neither Tergon nor Rhavas will willingly admit their involvement in the assassination plot unless characters are able to persuade them otherwise. Rhavas is prepared to identify the man who gave him his orders provided the characters are willing to assist him in getting out of Umbar; the promise of gold is alone sufficient to loosen Tergon's tongue. Rhavas will recount that the Dúnadan who recruited him had alluded to having connections with the governor. He will also mention the letter, pointing out that it makes no sense to give it to him since he cannot read.

Talking to Tergon

After a day or two of keeping watch at the Drunken Southron, Rhavas will be able to point out the man who hired him—Tergon is found on the street outside the inn, on his way to have a chat with Perion. If approached openly, Tergon will claim that the plot against Menelmir was an attempt to strengthen the position of Telemnar's faction.

He may hint at being in Telemnar's service, but under no circumstances will Tergon reveal his connection to Eätor. Characters who choose to shadow Tergon or inquire about his political connections may come to suspect that either the Côr Aran or the navy were involved in the assassination attempt (as he has, in fact, no connection with Telemnar).

4.8 ADVENTURE: THE SHADOW OF DARKNESS

Umbar is as safe a haven as travelers could wish to find on the fringes of Dúnadan power. Yet within its walls and beneath its streets, unspeakable offenses are committed against sojourners unfortunate enough to fall into the clutches of the Enemy's servants. Though the foundations of the ancient Temple lie buried beneath Eärnil's Tower (i.e., Tar Cirya), those stones continue to echo the name of Melkor beyond the hearing of the Usurper. Loyalist and traditionalist alike stand oblivious to the existence of a cult of the Dark in their midst.

4.8.1 A TALE OF BURNT OFFERINGS AND MISREAD PROPHECY

The Temple of Melkor was the first fastness of Umbar to fall before the might of Gondor in the days of King Eärnil. Within its walls Zimrakhil was slain, a wicked lord of necromancy of Herumor's brood who spoke with the voice of prophecy as he breathed his last. The words of the dark seer were remembered by the King, who wrote them upon a scroll and placed them in the Hall of the Faithful in Pelargir just before his death at sea:

Hear me, faithful slaves of the West!
And know that the hour of thy doom draws nigh;
For though 'reft of life, my words shall not perish.
Nay, for already thou knowest the sign that was hidden.
Its seed has been planted in thy midst,
And ten lives of Men shall not pass ere its fruit be revealed,
And should set foot upon these stones,
And raise up this Temple from its ruin.
Then wilt thou know his name, for it is a mortal name;
And he will call upon the Lord of the Dark,
That those who serve him should be redeemed at last,
And taste within themselves the cup of deathlessness.
And the name of Melkor will overshadow the ashes of their foes.

So spoke Zimrakhil of Orodreth of Morthond, in whose veins is mingled blood of both Elendil and Ar-Pharazôn (see Section 2.3.2); but prophecy is ambiguous and is easily misread when desire clouds reason.

Eärnil's scroll was not read for five hundred years, until the Hall of the Faithful was placed under the control of Caramir as archive and headquarters for the Côr Aran in 1438. The loremaster who betrayed the Hall to the Usurper's men was Ulbar, half-brother to Iriel and Colfen who lead the cult of Benish Armon in the Ethir (see Section 2.3.3). Ulbar had been instructed by the cult to search the old records for any clue to the identity and whereabouts of the child (or living descendant) of Tarannon and Berúthiel.

Ulbar failed in his task, becoming convinced that no such heir had ever existed; but he did discover Eärnil's scroll, in addition to many other artifacts recovered from the destruction of the Temple, and began to believe that Zimrakhil's prophecy in truth referred to himself as the agent who would bring about Melkor's promise of deathlessness. Colfen and Iriel were not persuaded in the least of their half-brother's claims, and expelled him from the cult. Reviled by his own, the frustrated Ulbar contemplated how he might bring about the things of which Zimrakhil had spoken.

Perceiving the King's need for a safe building in which to house his new secret police, Ulbar sought to endear himself to the Usurper by facilitating the quasi-legal transfer of the Hall to the Côr Aran. In exchange for this assistance, Caramir promptly recruited Ulbar into the ranks of the organization and granted his request to be assigned to Umbar.

Caramir did not wholly trust the overly cooperative scribe, despite Ulbar's apparent loyalty to him. Not only was he of mixed blood (and, therefore, worthy of suspicion by any account), but he also displayed one of the concern for the fate of the Hall and its contents that might be expected of a genuine loremaster. Consequently, Caramir wisely denied him the position of chief officer for the Côr Aran branch in Umbar, which he gave instead to Sirandir, an Umbar-born Crow with standing orders to monitor Ulbar's activities.

To Ulbar's dismay, the foundations of the Temple had been wholly sealed off by Eärnil's labors, but Castamir's ambitious harbor-expansion project in the enclave held for Ulbar the possibility that some forgotten tunnel or passage might accidentally be opened that would lead him to what he sought. He therefore maintained a close watch on the excavatory work then being undertaken by the Ethir-folk in the dredging of the new harbor of Tol Cirya.

In order to remain close to the harbor activities, Ulbar arranged for the proprietor of a quayside resthouse, the Black Horse, to be revealed as a loyalist, persuading Sirandir that the establishment could be used by the Côr Aran as a "listening-point" in the enclave. Ulbar's enthusiasm about the whole affair made it obvious to Sirandir that his zealous officer had some ulterior motive in having the Black Horse commandeered for this use and promptly informed Caramir in Pelargir of the development.

The spymaster responded by ordering Sirandir to play along with Ulbar's wishes, appointing him leader over a cell based at the resthouse, but planting within his ranks at least one operative who would report the cell's activities to Sirandir. This plant was Zâmin, secretly an agent for Adûnaphel in Umbar and an informant for Zimrakhil, namesake of the ancient prophet and architect of the Southron Confederacy. Zâmin soon became aware of Ulbar's extra-official activities, but disclosed nothing of this to Sirandir because of the danger of drawing the Crows upon the Temple.

UNCOVERING THE TEMPLE

The Black Horse resthouse was already a meeting place for the Ethir laborers in the enclave, which made it easy for Ulbar to stay informed as to the progress of the work on Tol Cirya. Some of these folk knew of the cult of Benish Armon, and, with many proofs and arguments, Ulbar convinced the Ethir enclave in Umbar to join his cause. Believing that the opening of the Temple would ultimately enable Ulbar to free their imprisoned lord from captivity (see Section 2.3.3), these Ethir-folk suspended their loyalties to Colfen and Iriel in order to cooperate with their new leader's goals.

After long and careful searching, Ulbar discovered what he sought—a way in. One of the many partially destroyed stone-cut tombs of Tol Cirya was excavated during the dredging work and found to be connected to the basement of the ancient Temple of Melkor. The foundations of the Temple were buried beneath tons of dirt and rubble, but the massive stonework of the tower above had accidentally become a solid ceiling, preserving what it had been built to erase forever. Eärnil's design was thwarted!

Ulbar possessed one of the original Adûnaic scrolls which had been removed from the Temple by Eärnil in 936, and which he had stolen from the Hall of the Faithful before his assignment to Umbar. Written from the hand of the dark seer himself, this scroll detailed the ritual consecrations necessary for the reopening and eventual rebuilding of the Temple as foretold by Zimrakhil.

Clearing the rubble from the Temple foundations was a staggering achievement, which took more than a year to complete. Because many of the Ethir-folk had unrestricted access to the area, and since there was no other way of moving so great a volume of earth without detection, the rubble covering the Temple had to be laboriously dislodged, carried in baskets, and emptied into the harbor. Some of this earth was used to seal off other tunnels which could provide a way into the Temple, in order to prevent the curious or the foolhardy from discovering their secret.

Having cleared the foundation, Ulbar and his shadow cult proceeded to the final stage of preparation: sacrifices to consecrate and purify the Temple precincts. An altar has been raised in the midst of the Temple, and once every week a human victim is burned alive as an offering to the Lord of the Dark. A total of forty victims must die before the site will be fully consecrated, and Ulbar's people are nearing the mark. Ulbar's success in procuring victims on a regular basis derives from his cover as the innkeeper of the Black Horse, which provides him with a steady stream of transients who have no ties in Umbar.

ULBAR IS DISCOVERED

But the cult has not gone wholly undetected. Ariel, a cult member, was heard boasting one night during a drinking-bout of attending clandestine meetings. Cemendur, an astute cell leader, had the woman shadowed to the Black Horse and reported to Sirandir that something suspicious was happening at the resthouse on a regular basis. Unconvinced of Zâmin's reports that all was well, Sirandir ordered Cemendur and his cell to monitor the comings and goings of the Black Horse. Sirandir wisely chose not to inform Zâmin of Cemendur's presence.

A third Côr Aran party has become enmeshed in the intrigue surrounding the Black Horse resthouse. Aware of the rumors of "dark forces" stirring in the Harad, Sirandir detailed a cell to investigating any possible infiltration of such forces in Umbar. One member of this cell, an operative named Girion, was convinced that he could prove the Tindómë-lië to be a sure conduit for these forces, citing Ulbar as an informant in support of this view.

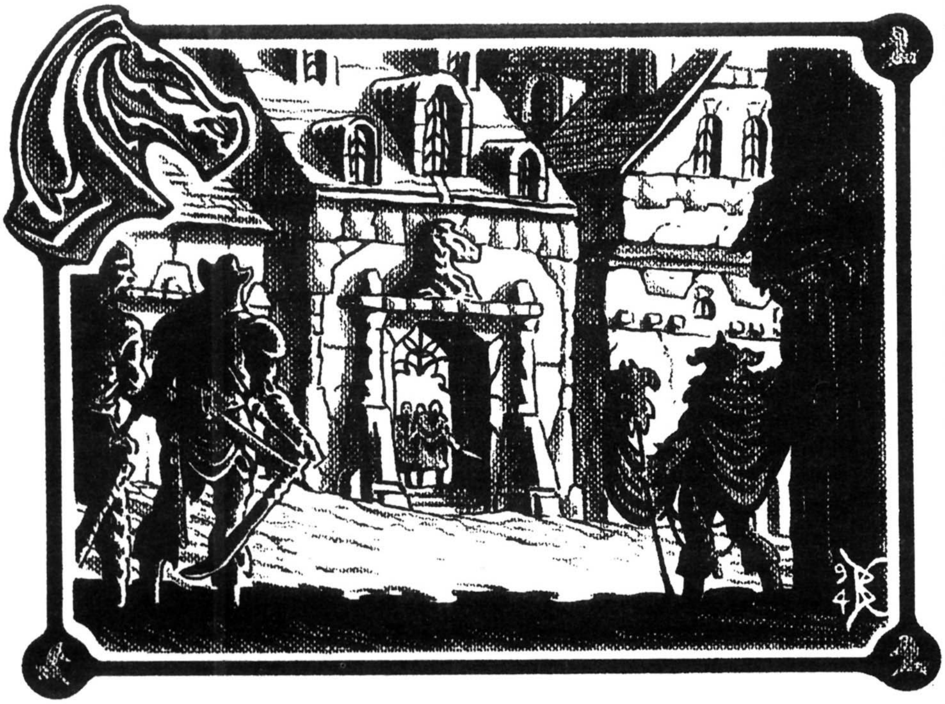
Girion was unaware that Ulbar was himself a cell leader, and Ulbar wanted to ensure that any Côr Aran investigations of "dark forces" should be directed away from himself; the Tindómë-lië provided an ideal scapegoat. Girion, however, failed to keep his word to Ulbar to withhold his name in his reports to his superiors, and so Sirandir learned of Ulbar's involvement; needless to say, his distrust of the Black Horse cell grew.

In order to keep Ulbar from becoming aware of Sirandir's knowledge of Girion's reports, the latter was ordered by his own cell leader to cut off all communication with the Black Horse's proprietor. Girion, however, was thoroughly convinced of Ulbar's hunches about the Tindómë-lië and secretly disobeyed Sirandir's orders. Girion formed his own investigatory team with two other like-minded cell members, who have continued to contact Ulbar.

Girion, however, was not completely deluded by Ulbar's red herrings and soon became aware of the Thursday night gatherings at the Black Horse. Girion and his comrades have taken extra precautions to keep their investigations absolutely unnoticed—especially by their fellow Côr Aran—and as a result they have learned too much for their own good.

Girion knows about Cemendur's cell; he has followed their lead in shadowing Ulbar's Thursday night movements and has discovered the connection with Tol Cirya. Girion himself has taken matters a step further by sneaking into the tunnel that leads to the hidden Temple foundations and now realizes what Ulbar is up to. Beyond the sheer horror of the thought of a resurrected cult of Melkor, Girion is terrified of what may happen to him should his continued contact with Ulbar ever be uncovered by Cemendur's cell.

Because of his insubordination in so serious a matter, Girion would surely be punished by death as a "collaborator" with the cult leader. He has decided that he must deflect Cemendur's attention from Ulbar somehow, so that the cultists' activities will never be revealed. What Girion does not know is that Cemendur's cell has also tracked Ulbar to Tol Cirya and is now planning a raid on the cultists at their next gathering.



The Black Horse

RETALIATION AGAINST ULBAR

Although she does not know that the Temple's location has already been revealed to Girion and Cemendur, Zâmin has learned enough about Ulbar's activities to realize that he is tampering with the future security of her mistress' plans in Umbar and has expressed her concerns to Zimrakhil. The sorcerer understands that the Temple's continued existence must be kept a secret if his namesake's prophecy is to be fulfilled and has decreed that Ulbar must be stopped.

Zimrakhil cannot himself risk involvement in this delicate matter, lest his own diplomatic position in Umbar be compromised; and so he has charged the cult of Benish Armon with the eradication of the threat posed by its wayward disciple. As the cult's enforcer, Colfen has taken this task upon himself.

Since his arrival in Umbar (see Section 4.6), Colfen has gone among his own people, persuading them of Ulbar's heresy and rallying them to take up arms against his followers. He does not know of Cemendur's plans for a raid, but will not hesitate to lay penalty of death upon any man or woman whose eyes have looked upon the Temple sanctuary. Blood will spill beneath Tol Cirya tonight, and not only in sacrifice to Melkor.

4.8.2 THE NPCS

ULBAR (1392-1441†)

Ulbar is the self-appointed leader of the Temple cult in Umbar. He is half-brother to Colfen and Iriel and so enjoys the veneration (and fear) of the Ethir-folk for Benish Armon (see Section 2.3.3). Ulbar continues to fulfill his Côr Aran duties as cell leader of the Black Horse, but often fabricates his reports for appearances' sake. Although scrupulous in his attention to secrecy, Ulbar has made few preparations for his own escape from Umbar should his activities become known to the authorities, fantasizing that the completion of the consecration of the Temple's foundations will somehow make him invincible to his adversaries.

Ulbar is rather short and lean, black-haired, with brown, penetrating eyes. He tends to observe people in a way which makes them uncomfortable, but is not aware of that himself. He is generally too little interested in other people to pay much attention to them. Apart from being generally greedy and ambitious, the only thing he really cares about is the fulfillment of the prophecy.

ZÂMIN (1417-1482)

Zâmin is a woman of many identities: cook and housekeeper of the Black Horse, Côr Aran agent and spy for Sirandir, and servant of Adûnaphel the Nazgûl. As an operative of Ulbar's cell, Zâmin has been excluded from her leader's cult, though she is aware of its existence. Most of her efforts are spent in trying to determine the nature and extent of Ulbar's activities. Ulbar knows nothing of Zâmin's connections with Zimrakhil or Adûnaphel.

Zâmin is a beautiful woman of mixed Southron and Dúnadan descent. Her distinctive accent betrays her desert origins, though her mannerisms tell of a woman who has grown accustomed to the ways of the city. Zâmin is never too familiar with strangers, though she is always deferential and polite.

TUOR (1407-1441†)

Tuor is a servant at the Black Horse and a member of Ulbar's cult. During Temple sacrifices, Tuor is responsible for keeping the victims from escaping. He is very loyal to Ulbar, and has a second set of keys to the holding cellar beneath the resthouse.

He is short, rather fat and hunchbacked, and laughs hysterically whenever he tries to talk to people. He has an irrational fear of spiders.

HUNTHOR (1419-1441†)

Hunthor is a recent arrival in Umbar. Originally from Caras Glingal along the peninsula, he left home to seek his fortune in the big city. Hunthor is staying at the Black Horse until he finds a job to earn money for a permanent residence. He cannot in fact afford to remain at the resthouse, but Ulbar has assured his guest that he may pay his debt over time. Hunthor feels considerable gratitude for his host's forbearance. If only he knew the true price he would be asked to pay, he would certainly not remain for long under Ulbar's roof (see Section 4.8.5).

Hunthor is a quiet, nervous young man, who left home after having been caught stealing a hen, something which he is very ashamed of. He is short, thin, and has light brown hair.

GIRION (1418-1441†)

Girion is an ambitious young Crow who is invariably convinced of the correctness of his own opinions, however weird and irrational they may be. A native of Umbar, Girion has been living a few years in some rented rooms in the city. He has spent a good deal of time in Umbar's libraries, accumulating a surprising breadth of shallow knowledge on diverse subjects. Although he believes otherwise, this encyclopedic knowledge has failed to lead him to any new insights.

Girion has black hair, blue eyes, and is of medium height. He generally seems to be a sociable person, but sometimes finds difficulty concealing his own self-importance and contempt for others. When openly confronted, Girion can rarely be persuaded to admit an error.

ZIMRAKHIL

Zimrakhil's primary duty in Umbar (apart from his public role as diplomat) is to ensure that the Temple foundations do not become common knowledge until Neithan sets foot on its stones as foretold by the prophecy, which will not happen for another seven years. Castamir's harborworks have increased the danger of discovery, but his own involvement in Gondorian politics has robbed Zimrakhil of the time and energy needed for constant vigilance. (See Section 2.3.3 for more information.)

The Southron prophet is too important to Adûnaphel's (and Sauron's) purposes to allow himself to actively oppose any attempts to open the Temple; hence, he is forced to rely upon the protection of the Ethir laborers and the reliability of Zâmin's reports. He has never met with Ulbar face to face, but he knows of him from his previous dealings with Iriel and Colfen. He regards it as their responsibility to thwart the folly of their half-brother and has given Colfen a very clear ultimatum about the future cooperation of Adûnaphel with Benish Armon should he fail to restrain Ulbar (see Section 4.6).

Colfen

Colfen is concerned not only with the matter of the Temple, but with Benish Armon's influence and authority over the Ethir community in the enclave. He conceives of the cult as essential to the identity and destiny of his people, and will make every effort to persuade those in Umbar of the propriety in holding fast to their heritage. There are some in Umbar who oppose Colfen's claims, but he believes that Ulbar must first be stopped if these dissenters are to be effectively dealt with. Colfen does not wish to see Ulbar dead, but will not hesitate to order his execution should he refuse to mend his ways. (See Section 2.3.3 for more information.)

Cemendur (b. 1408-1441†)

Cemendur has made a career of being a Crow, believing that this is the fastest route to success during the Usurper's reign. He has shown ruthlessness and ambition in his job, attracting positive attention from his superiors.

Cemendur is of average build; though agile. He has sharp grey eyes that miss very little. He is bald with only a fringe of brown hair around the head. While on duty, he dresses to blend among the city commoners. Though he seems to be an open man, he is in fact a skilled and deceptive faker.

4.8.3 THE SETTINGS

The Black Horse resthouse consists of a main building and a small stable in the backyard. The ground floor contains a kitchen, dining room, and rooms for Ulbar and his servants. The guest rooms are on the first and second floors. Ulbar has rebuilt the cellar to suit the needs of his cult and has dug a tunnel connecting it to the harbor sewers, which enable secret movement between the guesthouse and Tol Cirya.

The Black Horse

1. Food Cellar. A room lined with shelves containing various foodstuffs. Behind one of the shelves is a hidden door. Stairs lead up to the kitchen. A trapdoor in the floor leads down to the sewers by a ladder.

2. Ulbar's Secret Room. This is a storeroom for things Ulbar wants to keep secret, such as books, letters and various notes. Of all the cultists, only Tuor knows of this room. A ladder connects the room with a cupboard in Ulbar's rooms on the ground floor.

3. Passage. This narrow passage ends at a trapdoor in the stables, hidden beneath some straw.

4. Corridor.

5. Cells. This is where the victims are kept between the time that they are captured and the time that they are brought to Tol Cirya. They are usually guarded by Tuor, who is the only one besides Ulbar with keys to the door. The cells have one wall of thick iron bars, so that Tuor can see and hear the prisoners.

6. Storeroom. This is where various ritual items are kept—the black hooded robes, a long red carpet, and the sacrificial tools, consisting of a huge dagger and a bronze double axe. The dagger is of steel (+10 quality), with a handle in an octopoid shape clinging to a huge and valuable ruby. The axe (+10 quality) has the sign of Melkor carved on its blade. A trap door in the ceiling leads to a small tool shed, but is seldom used and therefore not easily seen.

The Foundations of the Temple

1. Entrance. The passageway into the Temple opens out from a crevasse near the base of Tol Cirya between two huge cut stones that have fallen against each other, forming a low arch just above the waterline. The opening is inaccessible during high tide. (See p. 87.)

2. Main Chamber. This forty by sixty foot basement serves as the inner sanctum for the cult's activities. It includes a stone altar and a fire pit for sacrifices.

3. Holding Cell. This side chamber—once a tomb—is used to hold sacrificial victims. Cnains with shackles have been installed into the walls to detain the cult's hapless prisoners.

4.8.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is for the player-characters to avoid becoming unwitting sacrificial victims for Ulbar's cult, and to escape the ordeal without falling prey to the other parties interested in ensuring that word of the incident does not get out.

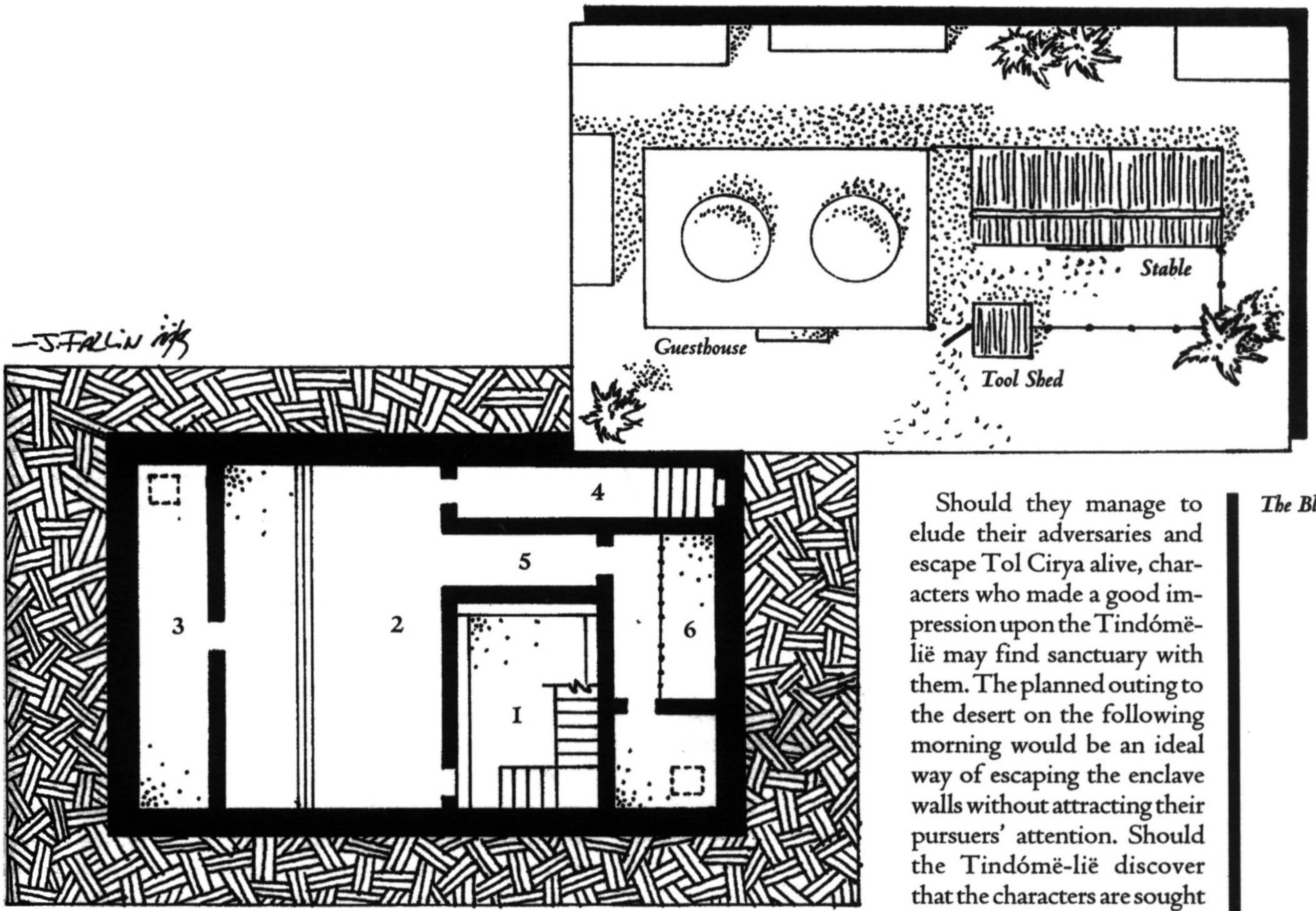
Starting the Characters

The easiest way to involve characters is for them to lodge at the Black Horse for a few days. In this way, they will become the focus of Ulbar and Girion's attention, which will give them ample opportunities to sense that something is not right. Côr Aran characters could also be easily integrated into Girion or Cemendur's investigations, while Ethir-folk could aid Colfen's effort to halt the sacrifice.

Aids

The encounter with Girion is the most important and obvious clue to the characters that they are in trouble. If they choose to shadow him, Girion will avoid proximity to the Côr Aran headquarters in Umbar, since he is acting undercover; instead, he will prefer to meet his cell comrades at less conspicuous locations, such as other guesthouses. He will have one such meeting on the afternoon of the day that he plants the false information about the characters.

Although the cult appears in this adventure more as a distraction, the gamemaster may choose to use it as a means of alerting the characters to their plight. One of the order might experience a cryptic vision gives them insights into the characters' danger at the Black Horse. Alternately, one of them may mention Girion's past interest and attendance of Tindómë-lië meetings.



Once captured, the characters will need all the help they can get. If they are aware of Tuor's fear of spiders, they may exploit this as a means of intimidating their jail-keeper. Unless they manage to keep spiders with them at all times, however, merely throwing the things at him will not keep Tuor away for good.

Getting past the cultists is another problem. The only way out of the crypts of Tol Cirya is through the Temple sanctuary where Ulbar's cultists will be gathered. Using some spare robes to disguise themselves might not arouse immediate suspicion as long as they talk to no one and attract no attention. Note that the robes are bulky and will slow movement somewhat.

Without the robes, they can try to make a dash for the tunnel, since the cultists will be completely unprepared for this. Depending on when they attempt this, however, it may lead to an unfortunate run-in with either Cemendur or Colfen's men which could prove deadly, especially if they are disguised as cultists.

Should they manage to elude their adversaries and escape Tol Cirya alive, characters who made a good impression upon the Tindómë-lië may find sanctuary with them. The planned outing to the desert on the following morning would be an ideal way of escaping the enclave walls without attracting their pursuers' attention. Should the Tindómë-lië discover that the characters are sought by the Côr Aran, they may be less willing to help them.

OBSTACLES

Although innocent victims of Ulbar's schemes, any characters found beneath Tol Cirya are unlikely to find either the Côr Aran or the Ethir-folk easy allies in their escape. Moreover, if they choose to ally themselves with one of these groups, they will be marked for death by the other. If the characters reward themselves by snatching up any of the spiritual paraphernalia, they may end up in trouble later, since objects of Melkorian origin will likely draw the suspicion of authorities and cultists alike. The principal obstacle the characters face in dealing with either group lies in convincing their saviors why they should be spared.

The Côr Aran believe everyone found beneath Tol Cirya to be a cultist (especially after Girion's report about them). This impression will only be confirmed if escaping characters are found wearing cult robes. In the darkness and confusion, there will be little opportunity for rational explanation. Characters who return to the Black Horse in search of their belongings will find the resthouse crawling with Crows.

Outcomes

At the very least, characters will be detained and thoroughly interrogated by the Côr Aran before Sirandir frees them. They will need to give some kind of surety to Sirandir that they will never reveal what they have seen beneath Tol Cirya to anyone and the less politically important the characters are, the more expedient it will be for Sirandir to simply have them disappear. Questioning by the Côr Aran may also prove dangerous if one or more of the characters are in trouble with the law, especially if the Crows already have files on them in Pelargir.

The Ethir-folk pose a rather different problem for the characters. Since they consider themselves to be above the law, they have even fewer scruples than the Côr Aran about disposing of any witnesses to the Temple's existence: they must offer something of value to Colfen in return for their lives. Those who demonstrate a suitable disposition may even be invited to join the cult. If Colfen is convinced that they might be useful to Benish Armon, he will bind them to an oath with terrible consequences should they betray his trust.

4.8.5 ENCOUNTERS

Arrival at the Black Horse (Day 1)

The characters will arrive at the Black Horse on a Sunday evening. Zâmin will receive them and show them to their rooms, offering them supper if they so desire. Although their night's rest will be otherwise peaceful and uninterrupted, perceptive characters may notice that the Black Horse is being watched from an adjoining building (though the Crows are competent and well hidden). A cell of six Côr Aran monitors the comings and goings of the Black Horse, working individually in four-hour shifts. The watchers are all native to Umbar and are disguised as laborers or artisans (see Section 4.82).

Talking to Girion (Day 3)

On the Tuesday before the sacrifice, Girion will approach any characters present at the Black Horse (most likely while having breakfast or lunch in the dining room) and engage them in casual conversation about the weather, the world, or whatever he thinks will catch their interest. If asked, Girion will claim to be at the resthouse to discuss some matters of business with Ulbar (which is partially true) but perceptive characters will not fail to notice how Girion's conversation is shrewdly focused on ascertaining their identities and business in Umbar.

The Crow will spend a good deal of time talking with the characters, subtly trying to determine who they are and how he might use them to scapegoat his own involvement with Ulbar (see Section 4.8.2). Girion will give a false report about the characters to the Côr Aran later that day. His misconceived plan is to avert the attention from Ulbar by accusing the characters of being responsible for the strange happenings at the Black Horse. Because Girion does not have access to the reports of Cemendur's cell, he is unaware that this idea is doomed to fail; as usual, Girion is convinced that he is absolutely right.

Talking to Ulbar and Hunthor (Day 3)

Ulbar will become very sociable with the characters on Tuesday evening and invite them to join him in a glass of wine. Hunthor, another guest, will also be invited. Ulbar will question his guests in order to determine for himself whether they would be suitable material for sacrifice (the principal criterion being whether or not their sudden disappearance would be draw attention). Hunthor will qualify (see Section 4.8.2).

Encountering the Tindómë-liё (Day 4)

On Wednesday, the characters will be approached by a member of the Tindómë-lië (see Section 4.54), who professes an attraction to the characters' adventurous style and would like to hear what strange and interesting tales they may have to tell. In fact, they will be invited to the weekly meeting of the Tindómë-lië, which is to take place that evening not far from the Black Horse.

The meeting takes place in a torch-lit room of a member's home, decorated with flowers and permeated with the heavy scent of incense. The evening's discussion will focus on a perceived "depression" in Umbar's atmosphere and on what measures ought to be taken to restore peace and harmony to the city. The Tindómë-lië will conclude that a meditative ceremony in the desert is called for.

Characters who choose to attend the Tindómë-lië gathering will be well received: they will be invited to join the desert trek (scheduled to take place on the coming Friday) and may also be encouraged, for a small fee, to become members of the order. The meeting will conclude with a light supper and some wine which makes people see unusual colors wherever they look.

Getting Captured (Day 5)

For dinner on Thursday evening, Ulbar will arrange for the characters' and Hunthor's food to be drugged, which will send them into a deep sleep. They will be bound and taken by the cultists to the Temple sanctum on Tol Cirya. The characters will later awaken to find themselves in a lightless, stone-cut chamber, around the time when Hunthor is dragged out to be sacrificed. During the course of the ceremony, there will be two interruptions which may prove beneficial to characters seeking escape.

Ulbar's cultists will be taken by surprise if the characters do something unexpected. They will try to kill the characters, but will fall into a panic when the Crows arrive, fighting to the death to defend their sanctuary. Some will grab the dagger and the axe and try to kill anyone coming to close. Ulbar will remain rather cool, using magic if suitable and escaping if it seems necessary.

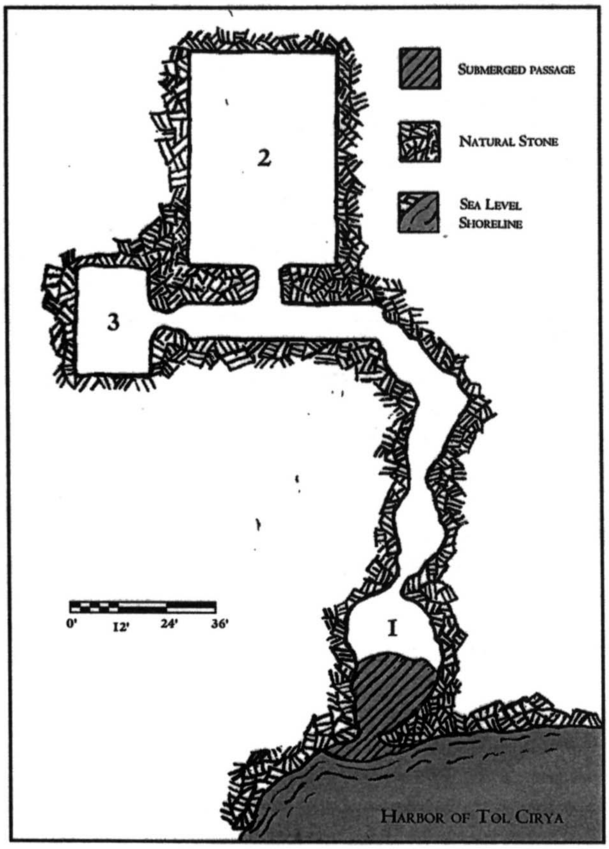
Cemendur's Intervention

Cemendur commands a cell of five other Crows—Amrod, Barahir, Denethor, Elros, and Fingon—who keep constant watch over the Black Horse. When on surveillance duty they wear a soft leather jerkin (SL/5) and a surprising number of daggers, slings, blowguns, and similar small weapons hidden in their clothing. During the raid, they will be better equipped, wearing rigid leather armor (RL/10) hidden under long cloaks and proper melee weapons. Currently, they use a room in a house across the street from the guesthouse as base for their surveillance.

These six will arrive during the sacrifice. Appalled by what they see, Cemendur and his men will try to kill those present, perhaps saving a few for interrogation. Unless they are clearly captives held for sacrifice, the characters will receive identical treatment. If Cemendur's men recognize them as the people Girion reported on, they will be formally arrested and held for questioning.

COLFEN'S INTERVENTION

Colfen will come with twenty well-armed Ethir-folk prepared for a fight, but will refrain from disturbing the ceremony until all of the Côr Aran have entered the tunnel on Tol Cirya (thus giving them no chance of escape). As far as Colfen is concerned, Cemendur and his men are a greater threat to discovery than Ulbar's cultists, and he will seek to eliminate them first, showing no mercy. By contrast, he will attempt to persuade Ulbar and his followers to abandon their sacrifices and submit peacefully. If they refuse, they will die. Characters will be spared only if they can be immediately distinguished from both the cultists and the Crows.



5.0 DOR-EN-ERNIL

The rugged peninsula of Belfalas is home to the noblest lineage in Gondor save that of the royal house. The descendants of Imrazôr the Númenórean dwelt in this land for more than a thousand years before the foundation of the Realms-in-Exile. Elendil himself confirmed their rule over the Faithful west of the Gilrain, naming their lord Edhelion "Prince." From that time onward, Belfalas has formed the core of Dor-en-Ernil, the "Land of the Prince," an area including all the land between the rivers Ringló and Gilrain. It remains to this day the great fief of the Princes of Lond Ernil. (Lond Ernil is later called Dol Amroth.) It is the one dominion within the confines of Gondor whose ruler possesses both the strength and the right to openly resist Castamir's depredations.

Although Linhir and certain areas of northern Dor-en-Ernil supported the rebellious Sea-lords during the Kin-strife, nearly all of Belfalas maintained firm neutrality. This policy succeeded only because of the unique status and power commanded by Lond Ernil's Princes. Their exalted bloodline, their ancient land-claim, their strong economy, and their remarkable war-host provide them with the ability to function apart (at least for a time) from the rest of Gondor.

While the Swan-prince's army is hardly a vast assemblage, it is an extremely well-trained and tightly organized military force. It is also a loyal and well-disciplined host. The Swan-knights of Belfalas comprise the greater portion of the South-kingdom's cavalry; but these are bound to the Prince by exclusive oaths of loyalty, and fight under his banner alone. Moreover, the feudal character of their allegiance is inviolable by the King, who is himself bound by the laws of Númenor to uphold the inalienability of Elendil's grant to Edhelion and his heirs. The haven of Prince Adrazôr bears witness to the limits of the Usurper's power, and is therefore the object of his malice.

5.1 A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Dor-en-Ernil is situated between the courses of the rivers Ringló and Gilrain, from the Gap of Lamedon to the sea. Belfalas, its large coastal peninsula, is divided by the jagged wall of the Ered Tarthonion, a wide arm of the White Mountains to the north. Its pine-crested hills enclose the plain of Nan Requain (S. "Knights Vale"), while its less rugged northern reaches along the Ringló encompass rich agricultural lands. Rivers, streams, and brooks support an exceptional diversity of flora and fauna, while the waters of the bay yield a bountiful harvest of fish. These rich gifts comprise the stable staple diet of its inhabitants.

Since the time of the Ship-kings, the coasts of Belfalas have been relatively free of human predators. Attempts to fortify the fief have been for the most part limited to Castle Amrûnaur, which guards the passage of the Ered Tarthonion, and the haven of the Prince itself. Those few coastal forts in existence date back to the Second Age and are generally in disrepair.

5.1.1 EDHELLOND

The southernmost haven of the Teleri in Middle-earth was established late in the First Age by Tharúdan. Its location was well-chosen and takes great advantage of the natural defenses of the area, being situated upon a limestone rock in the westernmost channel of the River Morthond. The islet has steep sides and a flat summit, upon which its inhabitants have built houses and towers, while the haven itself lies hid within the rock. Although a friendship continues to exist between Tharúdan and the descendants of Imrazôr, the folk of Edhellond share in the general estrangement from the Secondborn which characterizes the Eldar of the Third Age, and have few dealings with the Hildor of Belfalas.

5.1.2 LINHIR

Apart from Lond Ernil itself, the port-town of Linhir is the only center for shipping and trade in Belfalas. Linhir is strategically located at the confluence of the Rivers Serni and Gilrain, some twelve miles from the bay. The town is the principal gateway joining Dor-en-Ernil with Lebennin, and intersects the road to Pelargir where the latter fords the Gilrain. The history and economic orientation of Linhir have given it a unique political status within the fief of Belfalas, a status which precipitated its direct involvement in the civil war of the Kin-strife.

Although it lies within the hereditary domain of the Prince, Linhir is an autonomous township lacking in feudal arrangements. Its peculiar status derives from the circumstances of its founding as a naval outpost of Belfalas during the reign of Siriondil. Then a mere mill and manor, Linhir and its environs were granted as a feudal estate by the Prince to his younger brother Eärnil, who was then master of the Prince's war fleet. When Eärnil became the King of Gondor in the year 913, Linhir was claimed as a royal demesne and was later established as the haven for the Western Division of Eärnil's reorganized fleet (see Section 2.2.6).

Linhir's Political Status

Unfettered from the claims of Dor-en-Ernil's landed nobility by its royal status, Linhir began to grow into a commercial center focused on western Lebennin; but its mercantile orientation threatened to undermine the social and economic underpinnings of Belfalas' feudal system. The erosion of eastern Dor-en-Ernil's feudal economy led the Prince to contest the King's claim to Linhir, contending that its exclusively royal status violated the territorial integrity of the line of Edhelion.

In 1226, the year of Atanatar Alcarin's ascension to the throne, a compromise was reached. The King agreed to relinquish his hereditary claim to Linhir, reaffirming Edhelion's prerogative over its territory on the condition that the Prince would agree to grant Linhir township status and the right to mint its own coins. Under the terms of this agreement, the Prince would retain the right to appoint Linhir's Squire, and to have the town's coinage bear the image of Dor-en-Ernil. The Coin-master himself, however, would be appointed by the King, and the town's tax revenues would be collected by royal officers. Linhir's naval establishment would retain its own separate jurisdiction, just as with the Southern Division in Umbar (see Section 4.3.1).

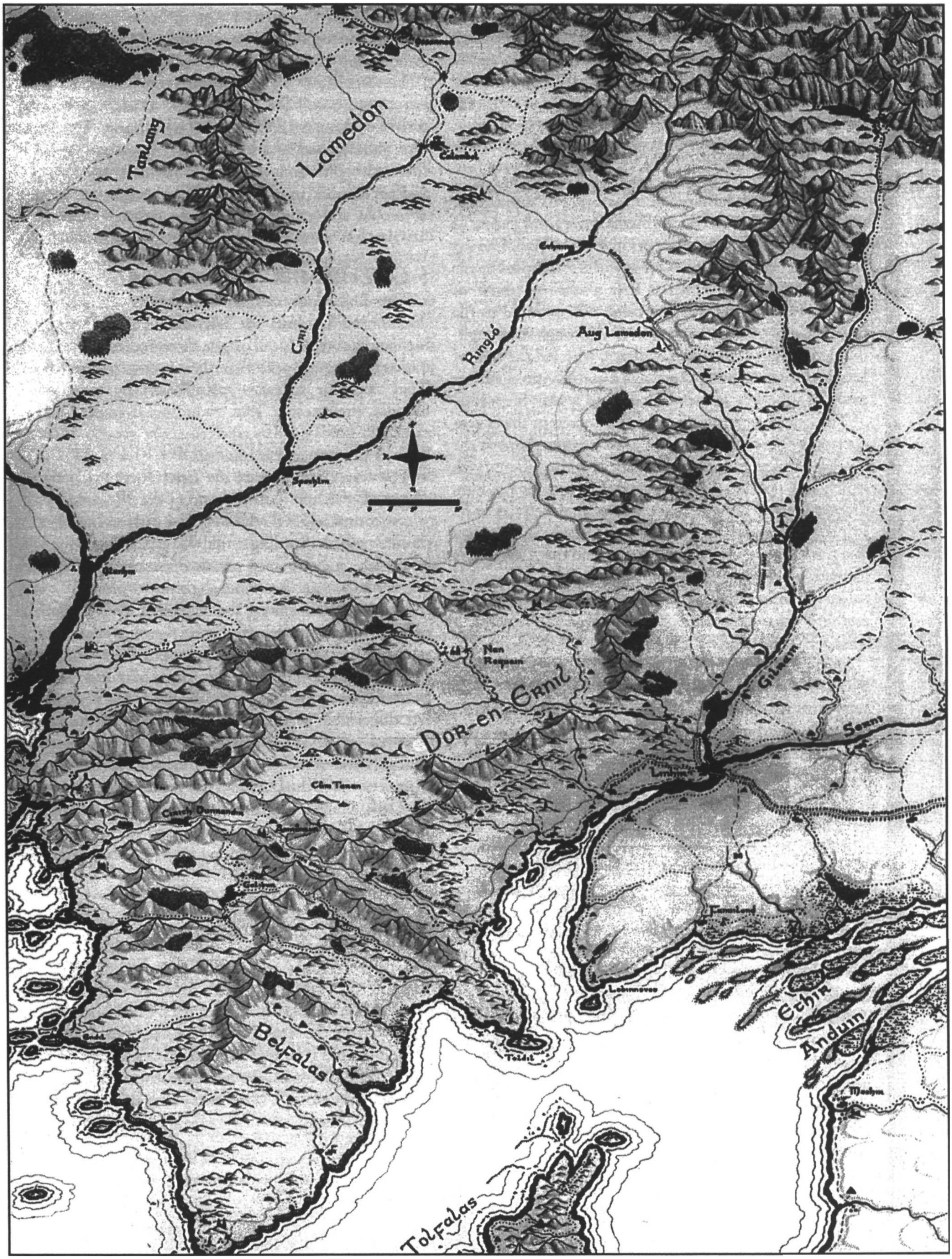
Although the settlement of 1226 gave the Prince an important foothold in the affairs of the town, it failed to save Linhir from the rising hegemony of Calimehtar and his descendants. The folk of Linhir were already economically oriented towards Lebennin, and Castamir's benefactions to the naval establishment brought increased prosperity to the town's port. Linhir was therefore numbered among the towns that openly rebelled against Valacar in the last year of his reign.

Linhir during the Kin-strife

In 1432, rioting broke out in Linhir against the royal tax collectors and the King's Coin-master. This revolt was actually incited by Daeron, the Prince's Squire. Adrazôr had commanded Daeron not to involve the town in the revolt, and sent Aradan to depose the Squire and restore order to the town. Daeron, however, was supported in his action by the Lord-captain of the Western Division, whose men helped hold the town walls against the Cavalry of Belfalas. Not willing to engage the forces of Pelargir to recapture a town that was already in revolt against him, Prince Adrazôr recalled the Cavalry and declared his neutrality in the ensuing civil war.

When Castamir became King in 1437, he altered Linhir's constitution, stripping the Prince of his right to appoint or depose the Squire, and forbade the minting of coins with the image of Dor-en-Ernil. Daeron was reconfirmed in his office, and has been re-elected Squire by the town council every year since then. His rumored betrothal to the Queen's sister will likely secure his position for many terms to come.

The Raj has held a mercantile interest in Linhir for centuries, and merchants from Bozisha-Dar man a trading depot in the port. While not a clandestine organization, these traders keep themselves abreast of political developments in Gondor, paying for useful information and occasionally sending spies to investigate rumors and interesting locations.


Tarlang
Lamedon
Calembel
Ciril
Ringló
Aug Lamedon
Nan Requain
Dor-en-Ernil
Gilrain
Serni
Linhir
Cûm Tanan
Belfalas
Tolfalas
Ethir
Anduin

The town authorities are aware of these activities, but have thus far declined to intervene, since Daeron does not consider them a threat. The Squire thinks it better to let the Regents of Bozisha-Dar gather their reports through well-known merchants, rather than to deport them and be forced to deal with unknown informants. The merchants' activities also conveniently keep the Côr Aran of Linhir occupied.

SQUIRE DAERON (1368-1634)

Daeron is the first royally-appointed Squire of Linhir in the town's two hundred year history. His support for the traditionalist confederacy stems more from a sense of political realism than from personal conviction. Having been given responsibility over a township occupied by the royal fleet, Daeron realized that a decisive show of support for the traditionalist camp was essential to the preservation of his own power. Although less high-minded in his ideals than Orodreth, who led the folk of Linhir during the war, Daeron is a conscientious officer who sought a way to avoid bloodshed within his walls.

The Squire of Linhir is prepared to accept the consequences of his political decision, taking upon himself the burden of treason against Adrazôr and the infamy with which the nobility of his homeland now regard him, though Daeron himself never speaks ill of Belfalas or its Prince. The Squire is keen-sighted enough to recognize that the Usurper's reign will not last, and that Castamir is likely to be deposed or overthrown by a more acceptable ruler; consequently, Daeron is much concerned that he establish other alliances not directly tied to Castamir or Morlaen—the primary architects of the Kin-strife.

Daeron soon found the friendship he sought in Queen Mûrabêth. Although the Usurper's wife, Mûrabêth's rivalry with Morlaen and the captains of Pelargir led to an amicable relationship with Linhir's Squire. Daeron's position as leader of the most important town of Lebennin and Belfalas endowed him with an almost uncanny ability to muster independent support for the Queen's faction in Pelargir and abroad. Mûrabêth has reciprocated Daeron's friendship with intentions of cementing their alliance through the betrothal of her sister, Telerien.

Castamir is unaware of Daeron's ties to his wife, believing him to be totally devoted to the confederacy. Not even Morlaen has perceived Daeron to be at odds with his faction, and has often turned to the clever Squire for advice and counsel, though this may soon change (see Section 4.6.2).

Daeron is a quiet and subtle man, but the current importance of his office gives him enough clout to get his way in most situations. He is always diplomatic and polite, never allowing passion to get the better of him, but is nevertheless keen with his words when he needs to be. His personal devotion to Queen Mûrabêth is well-concealed from the public eye.

5.1.3 CASTLE AMRÛNAUR

The first stronghold of Belfalas was established in the year 3320 of the Second Age in order to subject the Eredrim and to guard the Dunrandir pass. Castle Amrûnaur stands atop the rocky butte called Thurotundo (Q. "Thundermount"). The impressive, pentagonal fortress has an outer wall 50' high and 20' thick with five 80' turrets. Its keep is 125' high with eight floors. The peacetime garrison, led by a High Warden, consists of ten to fifteen knights and esquires, a hundred archers, and another hundred men-at-arms. The Verderers, a company of scouts and rangers serving the Master Forester of Belfalas, are occasionally used for reconnaissance duties.

5.1.4 THE MOUNTAIN FOLK

The Dúnedain call the inhabitants of the Ered Tarthonion "Eredrim," or "Mountain-folk." These hardy highlanders are of Daen origin, though they are generally darker and more stocky than their brethren to the north. They continue to resist assimilation by the men of Gondor, preferring to lead traditional lives in self-sufficient clan-holds ruled by chieftains, who are chosen on the basis of prowess and reputation.

The scarce resources of the Ered Tarthonion are the object of endemic violence among the Mountain Folk, whose communities rarely cooperate with one another for mutual support. Raiding neighboring clan-holds for food or cattle is a recognized means of demonstrating one's bravery and social worth among this people.

Local shamans among the Mountain Folk of Belfalas offer mediation on behalf of their people to the invisible powers of the world. Such "superstition" is looked down upon by the Dúnedain, but four thousand years of Númenórean presence in Middle-earth has nevertheless left discernible marks upon the content of the Daen's spiritual activities (as in their discovery of correspondences between the names and functions ascribed to the Valar). Some of the Daen secretly preserve the worship of the Dark, which brought about the ruin of their ancestors. Still, the Necromancer pays little heed to these lingering memories of his rule, deeming them of no value to his present designs on the South-kingdom.

5.2 LOND ERNIL

Lond Ernil is the largest Gondorian settlement west of Lebennin. With a westward-facing harbor inlet, this fortified town serves as a haven for ships sailing south or eastward into Gondor, for its rock-lined anchorage is guarded from the rugged seas of the neighboring bay. The haven's famous seaward tower stands as a beacon of safety and civilization for all who brave the stormy waves off this strategic promontory. Lond Ernil hugs the steep cliffs of the dramatic peninsula that forms the westernmost point in Belfalas.

Because of the limited space, Lond Ernil's architecture is in keeping with the vertical nature of the town plan. Nearly every building is constructed of carefully fitted stone and most stand as high as seven stories. Many of the edifices abutting the cliff face rise even higher, some reaching a hundred or more feet. Streets are often little more than covered walkways or wide stairs, since most structures are joined, or nearly so, at the upper stories. Roof gardens and elevated courtyards, the latter often situated on the third to fifth floors, provide access to the sun's gentle rays.

Trees and minute garden parks occupy odd nooks throughout the city, and playful fountains sit in some of the most inconspicuous of niches. Elaborate, brightly colored woodwork adorns even the most practical of structures and steep tile or slate roofs with alternating rows of different hues lend the city an enchanted air. Narrow, winding streets climb through gates and tunnels carved out of the bluish granite height. Each quarter of Lond Ernil occupies a leveled rock shelf, giving the haven a tiered arrangement.

5.2.1 HAVEN DEFENSES

The haven's defenses are tailored to the precipitous contours of the site. The Prince's citadel occupies the central and western heights of the hill and its intervening ridge. Rock-cut tunnels join the upper bailey with the huge tower that rises from the spit of rock to the west of town. These mammoth fortifications protect the southern and western flanks of the city, while sea-walls and the town ramparts guard the northern and eastern approaches.

At least two stone curtains bar entry at any given point. With deep foundations set in the solid rock of the Hill, these crenelated walls are frequently punctuated by superbly constructed round-towers, making any direct assault seem foolhardy. As if to emphasize the city's virtually impregnable character, turrets and bastions spring from the outermost spires of the beautiful blue-stone cliffs, augmenting these imposing defenses.

5.2.2 THE SEVEN TOWNS

Lond Ernil is divided into seven districts, which are referred to as "towns," each of which has some distinct quality, although the dividing points were chosen as matter of convenience and not because of social factors. Only the White Town surrounding the Cove of the White Ships shows any signs of being a distinct settlement. The stone culverts which carry spring-water from the heights demarcate the boundaries of the districts.

Normally, modest streams flow through these white rock channels, but after a hard rain the calm rivulets become torrents. Neither the drains in center of the city's cobbled streets nor sewers cutting through the bedrock can handle the swells, so these waterways insure safety in the face of the area's frequent storms. Akin to moats, they also cordon the neighborhoods in times of war.

THE WHITE TOWN

Surrounding the hallowed Cove of the White Ships, which serves as the haven's war-harbor, the White Town is home to the Prince's naval infantry. Many of the neighborhood businesses reflect the town's particularized purpose, and most merchants involved in the consumer trade maintain very modest enterprises which cater to the military men and their families. The White Town is also the center of the local woodcraft, sailmaking, and armorer industries, as well as for cartography specialists and makers of precise navigational instruments.

WT1. Inn of the Grey Moon. Built beside the First Quay (reputedly the haven's original wharf), the Inn of the Grey Moon is the favorite gathering place and lodging of visiting sea captains. The proprietor is Anderion.

WT6. Halls of the Sea-warriors. These chambers garrison the unmarried among the haven's standing naval infantry.

THE MIDDLE PORT

The Middle Port is renowned for its ship-building and fishing industries, where the finest sea-going vessels in all of Gondor are produced. The art of constructing the famous White Ships is still practiced in this quarter, and the secrets of the craft are jealously guarded by the local shipwrights. The Middle Port also houses a host of related artisans: sailmakers, coopers, smiths, carpenters, ropemakers, tanners, and pitchlayers all reside here and labor in the well-ventilated shops that line the streets near the quays.

MP2. House of the Long Sunrise. This brothel is an expensive and well-kept house of delight.

MP6. Fishermen's Market. This is the largest of the haven's marketplaces.

THE NEW PORT

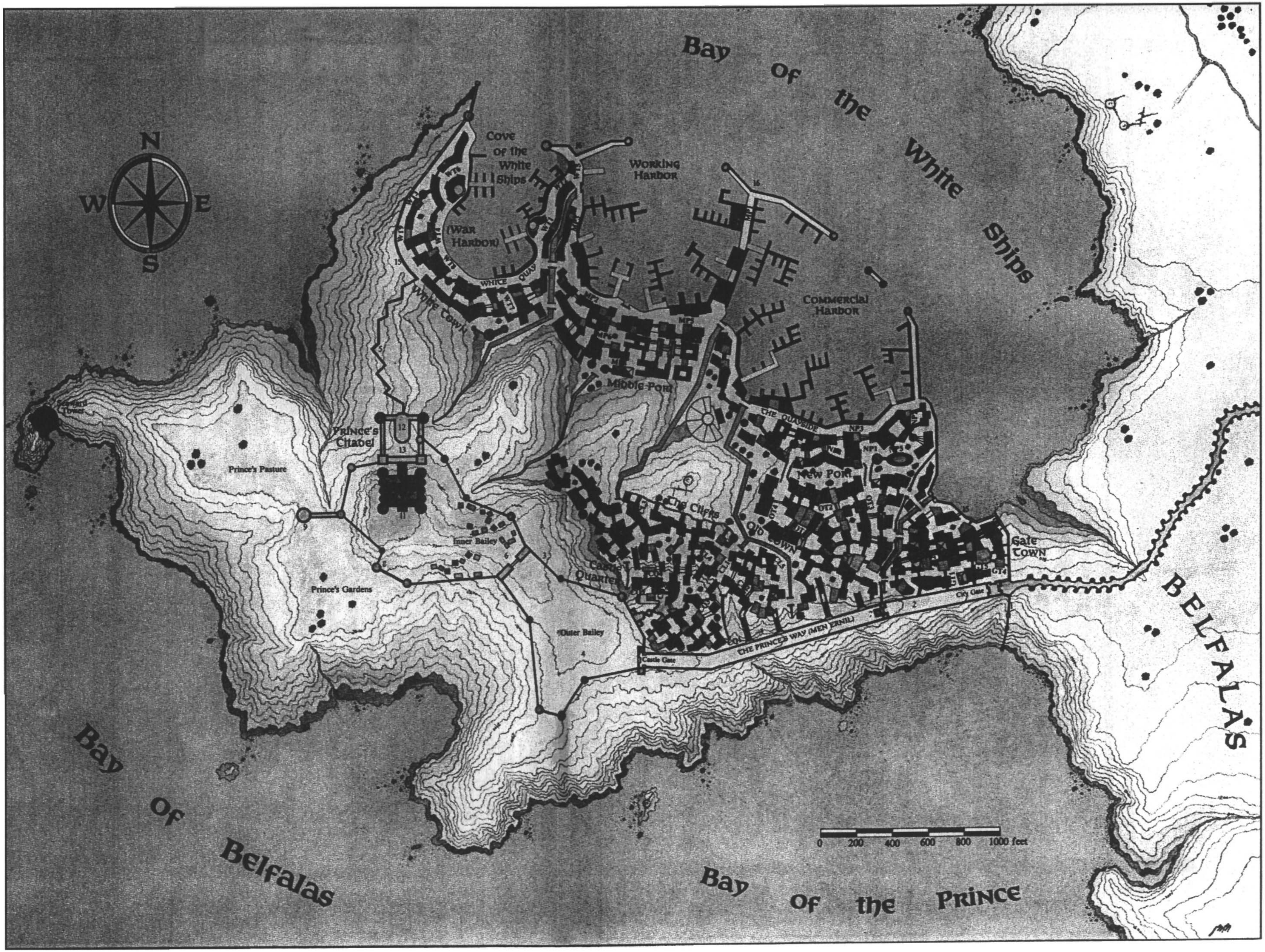
The New Port is the haven's only commercial harbor. Larger than either the White Town or the Middle Port, it accommodates wharves serving visiting vessels, and its warehouses and markets are capable of handling the modest volume of trade that passes through Belfalas. Inns and taverns stand alongside the district's many storehouses and trading halls, serving those who wish to avoid the cluttered Gate Town or the high prices of the Castle Quarter.

NP1. Butchers Market. This is the center for red meat and poultry trade, catering to the tastes of the elite.

NP3. Kraken's Wake. This three-story inn is famous for its plentiful shellfish and poor beds.

NP4. Merchants Exchange. This is a center for moneylenders and creditors.

NP5. Merchant's Hall. This building houses court facilities for arbitrating matters of trade and commerce.

Bay of the White Ships
BELFALAS
Cove of the White Ships
(War Harbor)
Working Harbor
Commercial Harbor
White Quay
White Town
Middle Port
The Quayside
New Port
The Cliffs
Old Town
Castle Quarter
Gate Town
City Gate
Castle Gate
THE PRINCE'S WAY (MEN ERNIL)
Prince's Citadel
Inner Bailey
Outer Bailey
Prince's Pasture
Prince's Gardens
Seaward Tower
Bay of Belfalas
Bay of the Prince
N
E
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0
200
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The Gate Town

The Gate Town is the easternmost and outermost quarter, lying on the saddle of the low ridge just inside the main landward entry through the haven walls. It is the dirtiest and rowdiest neighborhood in Lond Ernil, although it is still better kept than the finer quarters found in most other cities. Inns, taverns, and marketplaces line the town's busy streets.

GT2. Sign of the Blind Voyager. This tall, five-story inn is known as a haunt for folk willing to undertake nearly any unsavory task, so long as the price is right. The place is constructed of a strange, reddish stone and is built like a tower. Stories suggest that its thick walls are laced with secret passages, one of which connects to a sea-cave on the southern side of the peninsula.

GT4. The Black Spar. This four-story inn is located near the city's main gate and has seven common rooms, each capable of handling up to nine lodgers.

GT5. The Iron House. This is Lond Ernil's common jail.

The Old Town

Overlooking the New Port, the Old Town lies between the Gate Town and the cliffs. With the exception of the White Town, it is the oldest and most varied of the districts.

OT2. Galbar's House. This beautiful, four-story building is the residence of the merchant Galbar, who is also leader of the Côr Aran cell.

OT3. Squire's Hall. This four-story building is the administrative center for the haven.

The Cliffs

Above the Old Town and beneath the castle quarter is a large series of terraced buildings and winding streets. This area is known as the cliffs, for here the steepness of the hill provides little room for construction. While it is a generally residential neighborhood, the upper reaches cater to the castle garrison and contain numerous taverns and game halls.

CL1. Melrandir's House. This elegant, five-story residence is home to the Squire of Lond Ernil.

CL2. The Broken Prow. This is one of the district's better restaurants and drinking halls, and is the favored repose of the castle garrison.

CL4. White Shoals. This quiet tavern caters to the residents of the district, and is frequented by the Prince's sons.

CL5. Iriel's House. Tirazôr gave this four-story house to his mistress and mentor. The bottom floor serves as a study, while the upper stories function as living quarters.

The Castle Quarter

Also known as the High Town, the Castle Quarter is located on the upper flanks of the hill. A short causeway and a pair of drawbridges join this district to the castle's outer bailey, while four principal sets of stairs and an avenue unite the neighborhood with the cliffs below. Most of the haven's wealthy residents make their homes here, alongside the fine inns and taverns that serve visitors seeking audience with the Prince.

CQ3. House of the Shining Mist. Once an observatory, this ancient six-story structure is now home to Tirazôr.

5.2.3 THE CASTLE OF THE PRINCE

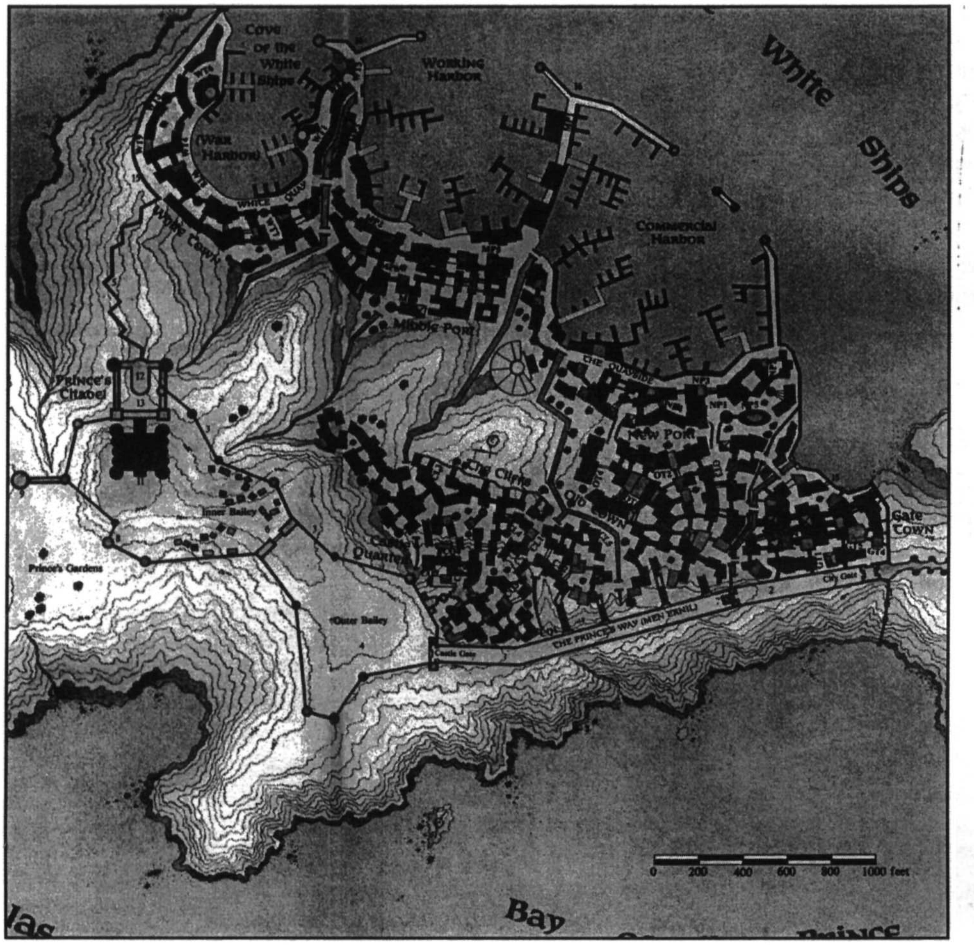
The Prince's castle is a massive fortress of modified concentric design. Set atop the highest and widest section of the ridge that forms the spine of the peninsula, it commands the heights of Lond Ernil where the cliffs are highest. In all Gondor, this citadel ranks second only to Minas Anor in strength.

On the three seaward sides of the fortress, the sheer rock face poses a virtually unassailable obstacle. Thus, the Castle is designed mainly with an eye to defense from the landward side, where the slope rises more gently. There are numerous levels to the defense, each positioned so as to support the one before it.

The castle is constructed principally of granite, but all the curtain walls and towers are faced with white limestone. The Seaward Tower is faced with a white marble striated with silvery veins, causing it to shimmer in the sunlight. The cellars underneath the Great Hall lead to cisterns, storage vaults, and vacant chambers suitable for housing refugees in time of crisis. Tunnels run from the outer towers to various parts of the keep, allowing troops to strike by surprise at the rear of any enemy who breaches the walls.

The castle even has a secret harbor, designed with the aid of the Elves. Cut into a sea-cave beneath Tirith Aear, it can be reached using a long spiral stair. The steps descend to a water-filled cavern where a small ship always waits, and a second can be moored. The stone gates of this cavern are concealed as part of the cliffside, and open only to those who speak a Sindarin password. Knowledge of this word is limited to the Prince, his immediate family, and a few trusted retainers.

1. Landward Wall. The first (easternmost) battlemented stone curtain wall is 40' high and 15' thick, forming a barrier that ends where the cliffsides fall into the waters of the Bay of Belfalas. A 20' deep ditch lies before the wall, crossed by a drawbridge. At each end of the wall, against the shore of the sea, is a tower built partially into the cliffside, with a splayed base, protecting the half-wall against being turned. These towers are 70' high, 40' in diameter, with 10' thick walls, crenellated turrets, and four interior stories. The only windows are arrow slits in the upper two stories. D-shaped bastions jut out from the



The Prince's Castle

joints of the wall as it bends backward, the rounded side facing outward. These bastions are 50' high, with 10' thick walls, and three interior stories. Arrow slits pierce the upper two stories. The flat battlemented rooftops serve as firing platforms for catapults, ballistae, and other war machines. The Haven Gate at the center of the wall shields the Prince's Way.

2. The Prince's Way. A paved road climbs the steep incline, to the tip of the promontory and the castle's core. It is flanked by walls.

3. Middle Wall. The second castle wall is designed like the first, although it is between 10' and 15' higher, depending on the lay of the cliffside. Where it sits above a level area, it looks down from a sharp incline.

4. Outer Bailey. Between the walls the ground has been leveled to form the outer, or lower, bailey, which is used as a drilling ground and tourney field.

5. Seaward Wall. The machicolated third curtain wall of the castle, 60' high and 20' thick, forms an enclosure around the town's western edge. Small turreted bartizans, 15' in diameter, project from the curtain wall, their arrow slits permitting flanking fire against a scaling attacker.

6. Inner Bailey. This upper bailey is filled with stone outbuildings essential to castle life: smithies, stables, kennels, mews and barracks for the common soldiers.

Seaward Tower

7. Gate Tower. This bastion rises 50', and stands some 90' above the surrounding cliff. It has 12' thick walls, a flat battlemented rooftop, and five interior floors. The gate arch passes through the tower, and murder holes in the arch's roof allow boiling oil or other unpleasantries to be showered on unwelcome visitors. The gates and portcullis are wrought of Dwarven steel and are Very Hard (-20) to open when locked.

8. Knights' Tower. This great tower is 100' high, with a 40' diameter and 12' thick walls. This six interior stories below the turreted roof are subdivided into apartments for the knights of the Prince's household and their esquires. The entire sixth floor is reserved for Aradan and his servants.

9. Western Tower. This tower commands a superb view of the sea to the west and serves as Giladan's residence. It is 120' high, with a 70' diameter and 10' thick walls.

10. Tirith Aear. This 350' tower is connected to the main castle by three underground passages. It serves as a bell-tower and beacon for passing ships. The Prince uses it as a private residence and refuge.

11. The Princes Keep. This magnificent complex rises 200' above the cliff. Its walls vary from 10' (near the top) to 30' (at the base) thick. Sloping stone piers anchor its sides, gently curving inward to join one another. Twelve stories in height, its entry is on the second story. This is reached by an exterior stairway. Prince Adrazôr dwells here with his personal guards and servants, along with other court members who permanently reside here (and do not reside in the surrounding towers). The Prince's banner flies from the golden spired pinnacle of the roof.

12. Great Hall. The Prince's feasting hall is part of a huge complex of battlements that project from the keep. The oval-shaped stone structure opens onto the Prince's courtyard. The Great Hall itself is 180' long and 60' wide. Here the Prince presides from his white marble throne on the raised dais over stern judgments and merry revels. The tiled roof of the Great Hall is supported by two rows of white marble pillars, with carven capitals depicting sea birds.

13. Prince's Courtyard. On either side of the Great Hall are herb gardens, which form part of a private, park-like area. The interior of the surrounding curtain wall is lined with finely finished stone buildings: kitchens, stables for the knights' horses, and apartments for knights serving garrison duty.

14. Haven Wall. A wall encloses the haven and its towns. 40' high and 15' thick, it is made of granite, with a sloping limestone-faced outer side. Square towers, 40' to a side, 60' high, with 10' thick walls, are positioned at the vulnerable bends of the wall. These towers have splayed bases. The main gate tower is located at the southeastern corner of town, but there are four lesser gates located along the south wall. All of the town's landward entries open onto the Prince's Way. The town gates are iron-bound oak, and each entry tower contains at least one portcullis in addition to the doors. Battlements line the top of the wall, which is reached through the three-story towers.

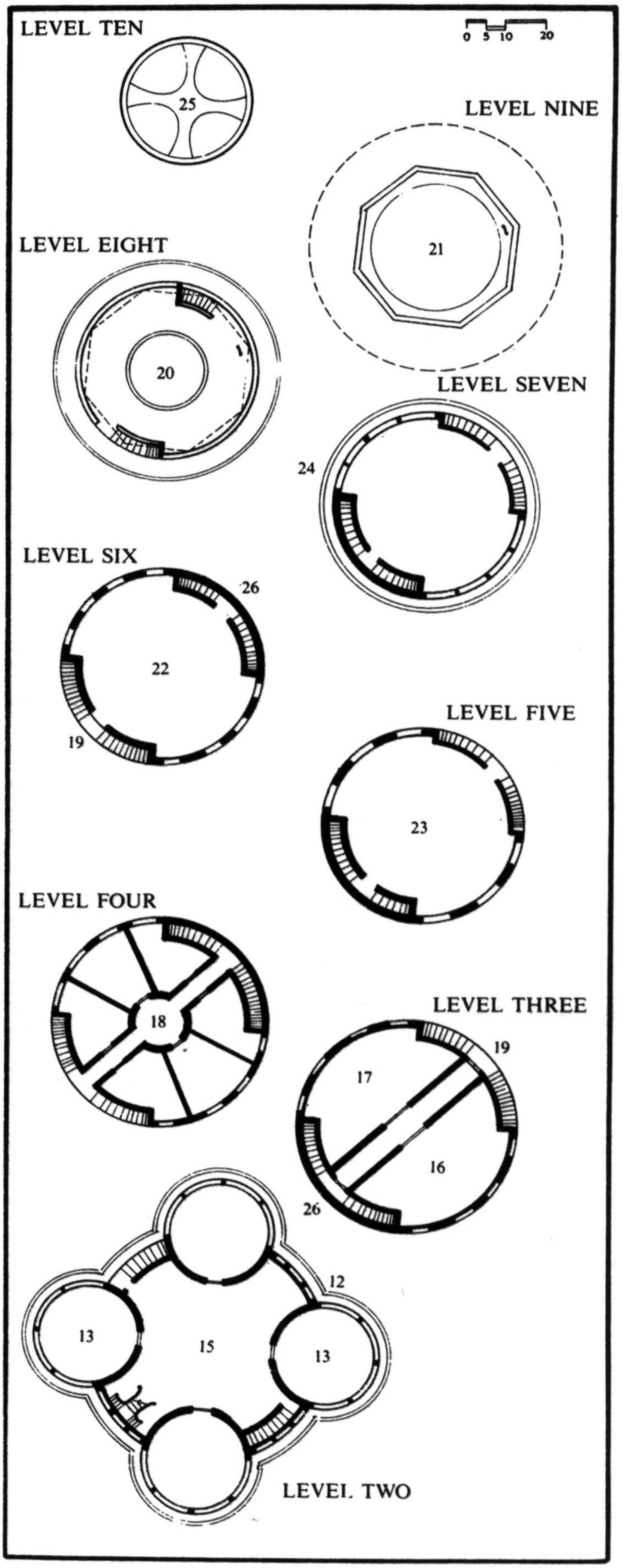
15. Harbor Walls. The ends of the walls extend across the harbor mouth, closing it off save for gaps flanked by round towers, 40' in diameter and 70' high. Enemy ships are barred from passage through these gaps by steel chain booms, which can be raised from the harbor bed using windlasses. The wall towers contain supplies of missiles and oil cauldrons. Catapults and ballistae are mounted on their flat roofs.

5.2.4 TIRITH AEAR

The tall, seaward tower rises from a pillar of rock due west of the castle, to which it is connected by three parallel subterranean passages. Each of these passages houses a wide staircase that climbs down, and then up, inside the mount. The two outermost (north and south) tunnels, wind near the surface of the adjacent cliffside. Deep, splayed window wells illuminate these stairways. Some of the wells are capped with embrasures or firing turrets, which guard the openings and permit bowmen to shower arrows on anyone foolish enough to attempt to scale the cliff face. All the other windows are barred apertures which are too narrow to force.

No windows reach the central passage, which lies deep beneath the rock. Two other entrances permit access into the tower. One, the Sea Door, opens onto an ocean-filled cavern that knifes into the granite beneath the tower. The other, the Outer Gate, is a simple steel door located in the side of the Tirith Aear about seventy feet above the ground. An uncovered stairway winds around the outside of the structure, descending to the ground on the western side of the bastion. The outer staircase gently spirals around the outside of the structure. The stairway permits guards to view at least a portion of the surrounding countryside at all times and, in times of war, acts as a sort of inclined battlement.

A three-tiered battlement surrounds the upper reaches of the tower. Each machicolated overhang juts out beyond the one below, permitting defenders on the parapet above to rain missiles on attackers without interfering with their fellow guards. A three-story section caps the very top of the tower. The upper story sits on a steel-reinforced wooden floor, which can be rotated. This area serves as lounge, meeting hall, and observatory, while the two-story chamber below houses the beacon.

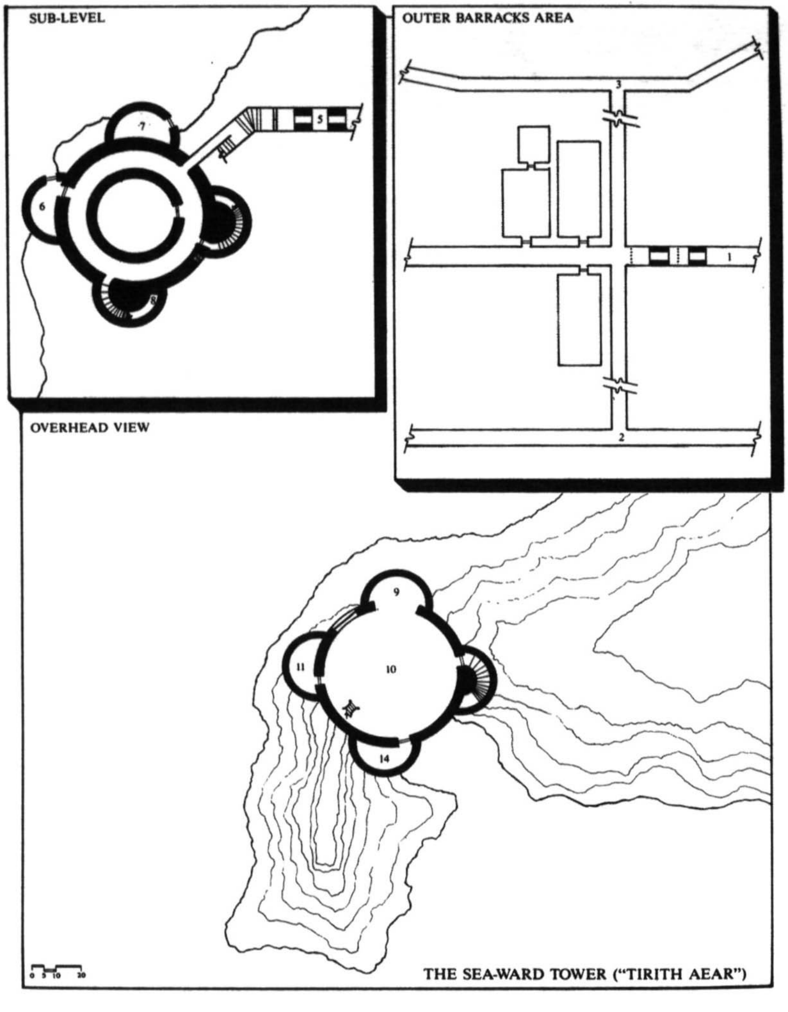


A twenty-ton, gold-inlaid bell, cast to commemorate the defeat of Sauron in the War of the Last Alliance, was placed here by Galadriel. A tall lamp also serves as a guide for passing mariners, located in the chamber below the upper quarters. Huge, movable leaded glass panels surround the room, which can be opened or closed, depending on conditions. Their varied hue colors the light as it projects through the glass, enabling ships to read the compass direction of the beam by analyzing its coloring: white for westward-facing, blue for northward-facing, red for southward-facing, and yellow for eastward-facing light.

1. Central Hall. This passage serves as the principal link to the main castle. The passage is guarded by seven sets of barriers, each of which consists of a stone pit topped by a drawbridge, a portcullis, a steel door, and another portcullis. All the doors and portculli are very hard (-20) to open.

2. South Hall. Running along the southern face of the peninsula, this hall is intersected by ten short side passages, all of which lead to a parapet or embrasure. The passage is guarded by five sets of doors, each of which has a pair of portculli flanking the door proper. All the doors and portculli are very hard (-20) to open.

Seaward Tower: overview & sub-levels



3. North Hall. The passage guards the northern cliff. It contains four sets of doors, each of which has a pair of portculli flanking the door proper. All the doors and portculli are very hard (-20) to open. The eight side passages lead to either embrasures or turrets.

4. Outer Barracks. Located off the Central Hall, the barracks serve as home for the outer guard. A kitchen and mess hall adjoin the transverse passage that joins the complex to the North and South Halls.

5. Main Gate. The entryway is guarded by four sets of pits, each of which is lined with spikes and crossed by way of a drawbridge. A guardroom above the entry permits defenders to attack assailants via murder holes. The door itself is flanked by a pair of portcullis The door and portculli are extremely hard (-30) to open.

6. Outer Gate. This door is accessed by a narrow stair that leads to the cliffs, and serves as a sally port. The door can be sealed with a special trap which is very hard (-20) to detect. If someone steps on the inner doorsill without first using the key in a special lock set in the swan symbol that flanks the doorway, a ten ton stone will drop, sealing the entry. Without a successful (very hard) maneuver, the trespasser will be struck (a +75 Huge Fall/Crush attack). A portcullis guards the door from the inside. Like the door, it is extremely hard (-30) to open.

7. Stable Chamber. Once the stable for Galadriel's horses, it now serves visitors using the Outer Gate. It has no direct access to the tower.

8. Sea Gate. This steel door leads to a stairway that joins the tower to the sea-cave below (see 11.4). A portcullis guards the door from the inside. Like the door, it is extremely hard (-30) to open.

9. Minstrel Hall. This feast hall has a moveable stage.

10. Great Hall. The tables in this hall can all be lowered into the kitchen below. A dais supports a pair of thrones. It faces the great stained glass window that looks out over the sea.

11. Lower Barracks. This area houses the main body of the tower guard.

12. Lower Battlements. A pair of crenelated battlements surround the upper faces of the towers' spurs.

13. Gardens. These roofed gardens are surrounded by colonnaded galleries. They serve as small parks.

14. Armory. This chamber houses enough equipment to outfit a thousand troops.

15. Library. Prince Adrazôr arranged for many of his family's heirlooms and personal manuscripts to be moved here after the Côr Aran takeover of the Hall of the Faithful in Pelargir.

16. Galadriel's Hall. Elegant, yet simple, this set of chambers is used by royal visitors.

17. Celeborn's Hall. This suite is used as an apartment by the Prince when he wishes to be near the sea.

18. Upper Barracks. These suites are used by the household knights, and contain private apartments for the knights' families.

19. Outer Stair. Five feet wide, this staircase has incised steps and drains, enabling guards to use it during inclement weather.

20. Lamp Chamber. The great lamp is housed here. This chamber is essentially a lighthouse, and the lamp is set on a great steel wheel. Rotated by a wind-assisted crank, the light casts its projected glow for many leagues. Its light opening creates a powerful beam.

21. Observatory. The chamber holds various astronomical instruments, together with a library. Each of its telescopes is housed on a metal floor section which can actually swing outside the tower whenever the glass wall panels are opened. The entire floor (like those of #22 and #23) can be rotated by using a wind-assisted winch, enabling the occupants to move their room (along with the rest of this level) to look out any portion of the tower. Lying just below the roof, the forward sections of its pitched ceiling open to reveal the night sky.

22. Royal Meeting Hall. This chamber is the Prince's private council chamber. It is often used in times of war.

23. Royal Lounge. Once Galadriel's favorite chamber, this lounge is now used as the Prince's study.

24. Upper Battlements. Three levels of crenelations enable defenders to strike tower attackers with deadly fire.

25. Bell Chamber. This open area is ventilated by dozens of small windows and drains. It houses the Elven Bell.

26. Inner Stairs. Punctuated by barrier doors (very hard, -20, to open), these stairs run inside the outer walls and unite the tower's fourteen levels.

5.3 SERVANTS OF THE PRINCE

Despite its size, Lond Ernil is not, strictly speaking, a "city." It is the private residence and harbor of the Prince of Belfalas, and lacks both an autonomous civil jurisdiction and a self-regulating "guild" system. Unlike Gondor's other urban centers, then, Lond Ernil is governed directly by the Prince's household and its retainers. Also unlike elsewhere, administrative positions are based on feudal obligation, rather than on compensatory remuneration.

This means that the Prince's officers do not get "paid" for managing his property. Political appointment in Belfalas does not generate wealth or power for its recipient; rather, appointment to authority is a reflection of preexisting wealth and power which, in turn, is based on hereditary possession of land. This creates a very different attitude towards government—one does not seek out a "career" position in the Prince's service. Nor can one expect to climb the status ladder on the basis of personal competence alone, since appointment is not even available to those without inherited status. This is not to say that public service cannot generate prestige. The highest offices are the object of perennial competition among the landed nobility, who equate such authority with better business and marital opportunities. However, the ultimate source of status, landownership, remains unaffected by what one accomplishes for oneself while in office.

In general, four officers dominate the affairs of Lond Ernil: the Squire of the Haven, the Captain of the Haven, the Warden of the Castle, and the Captain of the Cavalry. Each of these manages a different aspect of the haven's civil or military government. During the Kin-strife, a fifth office, the Chamberlain of Belfalas, is also important to the domestic politics of Prince Adrazôr's family, but this has little impact on the governance of the haven itself.

5.3.1 SQUIRE OF THE HAVEN

The Squire of Lond Ernil is responsible for administering the internal affairs of the haven. His duties include collection of taxes, regulation of market prices, maintenance of public safety and sanitation, and execution of civil justice. The Squire delegates authority over specific spheres of administration to prominent men who have distinguished themselves in their assigned functions but, as with the Squire's own position, these subsidiary offices offer no material compensation. Although the Squire is under no legal constraint to appoint a given candidate to civic position, certain families tend to emerge over time as the primary recipients of a particular office.

The Squire enforces his will through a Town Guard, a company of militia recruited from among the citizenry. Service in the Guard is decided by lot, and rotates annually. Although compulsory, it is sometimes permissible to decline a summons to Guard service for the support of one's family or business. In other circumstances, the Captain of the Guard will assign a stipend for the maintenance of dependents for the term of service in question. Under the threat of war, a larger militia force can be mustered, but these will rarely be sent beyond the walls of the haven in fulfillment of their duties.

5.3.2 CAPTAIN OF THE HAVEN

The Prince of Belfalas havens a small fleet of eight warships and a number of smaller vessels designed for coastal defense. The Captain of the Haven is officially subordinate to the Squire, but in practice exercises substantial freedom, since the majority of his duties are carried on outside of Lond Ernil. There is a thousand-man, standing naval infantry under his command, though the majority of this force is not on active duty unless a need arises.

5.3.3 THE WARDEN OF THE CASTLE

Each of Dor-en-Ernil's chief garrisons—Castle Amrûnaur, Lond Ernil, and Barad Gilrain—are commanded by a Warden. In time of war, he will lead the combined forces of the citizen militia and regular castle garrison. In 1441, this garrison consists of two hundred professional yeomen and three hundred men-at-arms. The garrison is divided into companies of one hundred men, each led by a captain and five sergeants. This standing force is fed, equipped, and housed by the Prince, and is generally recruited from among the peasantry.

5.3.4 CAPTAIN OF THE CAVALRY

The cavalry of Belfalas is a war-time muster of Dor-en-Ernil's landed nobility. Although he orders the muster, the Prince may elect to confer the responsibility of commanding the knights in the field to a captain of his own choosing. In time of peace, this officer would remain in Lond Ernil to command the Prince's Guard, a standing company of fifty "household" knights—that is, knights who are bound exclusively to the Prince's house and who do not necessarily own land (often recruited from among the non-inheriting sons of the nobility). Of this company, fifteen are "full" knights, while the other thirty-five are "apprentice" knights. With every knight there is an esquire, also capable of riding with the muster.

5.3.5 CHAMBERLAIN OF BELFALAS

The office of Chamberlain involves all of the administrative responsibilities normally assumed by the Prince himself. With respect to Lond Ernil, however, his day-to-day role is quite minimal. This is especially true during the Kin-strife, since the four major officers of the haven have already been appointed by the Prince. In these circumstances, the Chamberlain's primary function is to coordinate the activities of Squire, Warden, and Captains, and to pass judgement where conflicts over jurisdiction arise. The Chamberlain typically acts in the context of council meetings, at which all of the chief officers of the Haven are present. Unlike the councils of most of Gondor's cities, that of Lond Ernil is strictly advisory—not elective.

5.3.6 THE GARRISON

Lond Ernil's garrison is normally rather small. The centuries preceding the Kin-strife were peaceful and there were no obvious sea-borne threats to the city. However, as soon as the fighting broke out in the Anduin valley in 1432, the Prince ordered the strengthening of Dor-en-Ernil's fortifications. All garrisons were increased significantly in size and the land and naval forces spent more time exercising. When the fighting died down after the sack of Osgiliath, the military readiness was decreased, but not to pre-1432 levels.

The main task of all these units, though never stated explicitly, is to prevent Castamir from seizing the city by coup. Hence, the garrison is always in a state of high readiness, and at least half of the soldiers are on duty at any given time. Those on leave must be able to reach their units within one hour. Dor-en-Ernil's borders are patrolled by scouts whose task is to spot approaching royal forces from Lebennin or Lamedon. Adrazôr knows very well how Castamir's men seized Minas Ithil by surprise, and he does not want that feat to be repeated in Belfalas.

Another, more tangible threat which has emerged in the course of the Kin-strife are the Ethir-outlaws (see Section 3.5.4), whose constant raiding of Belfalas' coasts have grown to epidemic proportions. Although Adrazôr's ships are able to protect Lond Ernil against Lannaigh's depredations, the city's isolated location prevents the Prince from effectively defending all the rest of Belfalas. This is especially true along the eastern coasts near Linhir, whose Lord-captain has been instructed to look the other way whenever there is report of an outlaw attack on Dor-en-Ernil.

5.4 THE INHABITANTS

The inhabitants of Lond Ernil are subjects of the Prince, and are almost entirely of Dúnadan ancestry. Citizenship is defined by a set of traditional civic obligations concomitant upon all adult males, who are bound to the Prince's house by exclusive ties of loyalty. Property may be held privately in Lond Ernil, but is subject to an annual "tithe," expressing the Prince's ultimate ownership of all land in the haven. Serious violations of haven laws may be considered grounds for exclusion from property holding.

Lond Ernil's population is little affected by the Usurper's reign. The Kin-strife was a civil war fought over the rule of Gondor—not of Belfalas, whose lineage remains unchallenged—and the self-sufficiency of the fief left it relatively untouched by Pelargir's rising economic supremacy in the bay. The political autonomy of Dor-en-Ernil has similarly exempted it from Castamir's administrative and legal aberrations. These factors all combine to form a nigh unshakable interest in preserving things as they are, which makes the security and continuity of the Prince's house the primary concern of Lond Ernil's inhabitants—noble and commoner alike.

5.4.1 THE LINE OF EDHELION

The princely house of Belfalas derives its claim from the name of Edhelion, its venerable ancestor who received his estate and title from Elendil himself in the year of Gondor's foundation. Because the Kings of Gondor premise their existing rule not on Elendil, but rather upon his son Anárion, the line of Edhelion has always considered itself coeval with the royal house. The Prince of Belfalas is the friend and ally of the South-kingdom in time of war, but in peacetime he is bound only by a nominal tribute and by the common laws of Númenor which the two realms share.

The authority of the Prince derives not only from Elendil's grant to Edhelion, but more importantly from Edhelion's own ancestry. Edhelion's family had ruled the community of the Faithful in Pelargir for nearly a thousand years, before Elendil and his sons came to Middle-earth in exile from the drowning of Númenor in S.A. 3320. Pelargir had itself been founded by Edhelion's forefather, Veantur, whose own father—Imrazôr the Númenórean—had been the last Captain of the Venturers, before the Guild's dissolution at the hands of Tar-Ancalimon in S.A. 1883.

As Captain of the Venturers, Imrazôr enjoyed the special favor of the Maia Uinen, and this grace was inherited by his descendants. In recent years, however, the line of Edhelion has fallen on uncertain times. Two constrictive marriage alliances with the line of Calimehtar have not improved relations between Belfalas and Lebennin, and the unmarried state of the current Prince's sons makes the continuity of his house vulnerable to misfortune and malice. None can say what the future may hold for Lond Ernil and its Prince.

5.4.2 THE ELITE

To a greater degree than elsewhere in Gondor, the ruling elite of Belfalas are a genuine nobility; that is, access to political and economic power in Dor-en-Ernil is controlled by a hereditary order of aristocrats, defined by knighthood. Also unlike the majority of the South-kingdom, the elite of Belfalas do not reside in an urban center; instead, the nobility spends the greater part of the year tending their rural estates, which generally produce all of their needs. With the exception of the Prince's household knights and officers, then, none of the elite actually live in Lond Ernil, and those that visit the haven are housed in the Prince's castle.

5.4.3 THE COMMONERS

Like the majority of the Prince's subjects, the inhabitants of Lond Ernil are oriented towards economic self-sufficiency and supporting the lifestyle of the nobility. There is a significant import trade in luxury goods, but this exercises little impact upon the foundations of economic power. The greater part of the haven's citizens are either artisans or fishermen. Mercantile occupations tend to predominate among non-permanent residents of Lond Ernil. A substantial segment of the permanent population is involved in occupations oriented towards the support and upkeep of the Prince's fleet.

It is common for practitioners of a given trade in Lond Ernil to cooperate with one another, but voluntary association does not lead to the formation of regulatory guilds, as elsewhere in Gondor; rather, members of an occupation will appeal to a benefactor or patron to obtain material assistance or arbitration in a dispute. Such bonds, however, are informal and do not possess legal status outside of their concrete relationships. Often, one of the Prince's officers himself will become a patron for several occupational associations in the haven. At other times, the most prominent and venerated craftsman of a trade (or his family) will assume this role.

5.4.4 NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

Prince Adrazôr (1350-1441†)

Adrazôr is the eighteenth Prince in the line of Edhelion, and has ruled Belfalas since he succeeded his father Tirkhôr in the year 1402. Adrazôr has proven himself to be a very competent ruler and is much liked by his subjects. He managed to keep the fighting away from Belfalas during the Kin-strife, with the exception of the confederate forces bound for skirmishes in Anfalas, which he could not prevent from passing through his territory without opposition.

The Prince fathered three sons and two daughters, before his beloved wife passed away in the year 1413. Her premature death remains an enduring source of grief to Adrazôr. His children too have become a great burden of concern—his daughters hostages of the Usurper and his unmarried sons bitter rivals. Although he does not yet fully trust the governance of the fief to his sons, Adrazôr has attempted to assuage their rivalry by dividing the majority of his own responsibilities between the eldest two, Aradan and Giladan.

Adrazôr has lost the physique and poise that characterize a Dúnadan nobleman. Instead, he is tall, thin, and frail with white, sparse hair on his head. His grey eyes look tired and he has a hard time concentrating for more than some minutes at a time. After being stricken by Iriel's sorcery (see Section 5.7) Adrazôr is bedridden and is hence usually dressed in a long white gown.

Chamberlain Giladan (1401-1441†)

Giladan is the second son of Prince Adrazôr. With the outbreak of the Kin-strife, Adrazôr appointed him Chamberlain of Belfalas, delegating to Giladan the day-to-day governance of the fief, a task for which he has shown great skill. Giladan is well-loved by the people of Lond Ernil.

There is considerable friction between Giladan and his elder brother Aradan, due to their dissimilar personalities and ambitions. The brothers have never been close friends, and during the past decades they have drifted even further apart. Giladan has no knowledge of Aradan's loyalist sympathies. Instead, he sees his brother as an irresponsible warrior lacking an understanding of the subtleties of administration.

Giladan is tall and fair, with short black hair. though his face is somewhat disfigured by his constantly squinting eyes. A severe near-sightedness prevents him from excelling in physical activities. Giladan displays a keen mind and a good memory, and has a major interest in intellectual matters.

Captain Aradan (1390-1611)

Aradan is the eldest son of Prince Adrazôr. Since 1425, Aradan has served his father as Captain of the Cavalry of Belfalas, and his charisma and military skills have won him popularity as a leader among the knights of Edhelion. As the Prince's chosen heir, Aradan received extensive military and administrative training as a child, in which he excelled even as a youth. Adrazôr's pride in his firstborn son has ignited jealousy and envy among his younger brothers, especially in Tirazôr.

Unlike his brother Giladan, Aradan's vision of the role of Belfalas extends beyond the internal stability of the fief. Aradan believes that the strength of the knights should be used to overthrow the Usurper and restore order to the South-kingdom under the rule of Valacar's chosen heir. These views are shared by Aradan with his close friend, Prince Maeglin of Morthond.

Aradan's age does not show, due to his Dúnadan blood. His hair is thick and black and his tall body is straight and muscular. The only sign of the years are deep furrows in his face, created by all the time spent in the wilderness. Aradan's military upbringing has caused problems for him when working with civilians, and there are many individuals who do not get along with him at all.

SQUIRE MELRANDIR (1382-1523)

Melrandir is the Squire of Lond Ernil. Born the second son in a high-ranking noble family, Melrandir was recruited into the Prince's administration, advancing from position to position until he gained the confidence of Adrazôr. Melrandir was appointed Squire in 1428, and has managed his office very well since then, and has worked closely with both Adrazôr and Giladan. Aradan dislikes the Squire, however, due to the latter's huge appetite and markedly civilian approach to life.

Melrandir is of medium height and fat, due to a huge appetite. His hair and eyes are brown. He is dressed as befits a his position, though he deals with everybody in a relaxed and jocular way.

WARDEN BEREGOND (1399-1503)

Beregond is a knight of Edhelion and serves as Warden of the Prince's castle. He is a competent garrison commander, and is well-liked by the Chamberlain.

Beregond is short for a Dúnadan, but very muscular. His curly hair is brown and his eyes are hazel. Like the Captain of the Cavalry, Beregond is a strict and difficult man to deal with. He and Aradan thoroughly dislike each other, and are constantly at odds in all matters, great and small. He is a strict man and openly dislikes anything he considers improper behavior.

TIRAZÔR (1409-1441†)

Tirazôr is the third and youngest son of Prince Adrazôr. At the age of twenty-six, Tirazôr's father judged him unfit to be entrusted with any governmental office, and arranged for him to pursue a scholarly career at the Hall of the Faithful in 1435. There he met Iriel, who became his tutor and later his mistress (see Section 2.3.3).

During the three years he spent in Pelargir, Tirazôr joined Iriel and her half-brother Ulbar in their quest for arcane knowledge concerning the Black Númenórean Queen, Berúthiel (though the true purpose of these researches was never made known to Adrazôr's unwary son, who was primarily interested in how he might, through magical knowledge, acquire power for himself). Tirazôr began dabbling in sorcery, without success. His failures incited him to delve deeper into the subject but, despite many serious secret experiments at his study in Lond Ernil, he has been unable to get any result whatsoever, unless it were the corruption of his soul.

Tirazôr returned with Iriel to Belfalas in 1438, after the Côr Aran assumed control of the Hall of the Faithful. Tirazôr attempted to conceal his continuing liaison with Iriel from his family, claiming her as his mentor, but his father knew better, and was displeased.

Adrazôr provided his son with a private residence and annual stipend in Lond Ernil, which gave him freedom to continue his academic pursuits; but the Prince made it clear to Tirazôr that his liaison with this woman of questionable lineage would not be tolerated under Adrazôr's roof. Iriel skillfully played on Tirazôr's feelings of neglect and distrust, fueling his envy towards his brothers and subtly encouraged him to one day seek retribution.

Tirazôr is tall and gaunt with a thick mane of long, black hair. His grey eyes are stern and pitiless. He is usually dressed in black and scarlet. He speaks in a stilted upper-class manner, and gives incomprehensible replies to questions.

5.5 CLANDESTINE GROUPS

The haven of the Prince is too small and too well-governed for a covert organization to go unnoticed for long. There is no organized crime, and criminals are primarily limited to unsophisticated thieves, burglars, smugglers, or fences. Lond Ernil is unique to the cities of Gondor during the Usurper's reign in that it possesses no organized loyalist groups (see Section 5.4). Eldacar has supporters, but they maintain a low profile. Those that have contact with each other meet only in private and lack ambitious plans. They are generally uncoordinated and, in most instances, unaware of each others' existence.

THE CÔR ARAN

In Lond Ernil, Côr Aran activity is not only clandestine, but illegal. The presence of King's agents in Belfalas without the consent or knowledge of the Prince is a serious breech of Dor-en-Ernil's political integrity, and would generate widespread condemnation of Castamir in the Council of Gondor were it ever brought to light. Prince Adrazôr and his closest advisors are nevertheless aware of the presence and identity of Côr Aran in the haven, but keep quiet about it, holding it as surety for Belfalas should they ever need to threaten the King with blackmail.

Iriel has ties to the Côr Aran in Pelargir, but does not actively work with Caramir's organization. The single Côr Aran cell in Lond Ernil is led by a Pelargir-based merchant named Galbar, whose servants and assistants make up a team of intelligence-gatherers under cover of trading ventures in Dor-en-Ernil. In 1441, this cell is oriented towards uncovering loyalists (for the most part, unsuccessfully).

SERVANTS OF THE ENEMY

A substantial minority among the Mountain Folk worships the Dark, a cult which was established among them through the dominion of Sauron during the Second Age. It has been kept alive by the covert influence of the Necromancer's agents. The followers of "The Old Ways" gather at isolated sites in the mountains to sacrifice animals and men to the King of the World, praying for his return.

5.6 ADVENTURE: A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

The Usurper has set in motion his designs to undermine the line of Edhelion, and to bring Belfalas into his power. His agent, however, has plans of her own which will ultimately work against Castamir's wishes. The first target of the King's malice is Prince Maeglin of neighboring Morthond, cousin to Adrazôr. If he falls, it will bring the rule of Dor-en-Ernil one step closer to Pelargir. Yet a death in the family may work to unite a divided household against its common peril.

5.6.1 A TALE OF BIRTHDAYS AND FUNERALS

Castamir's aim is to bring the fiefs of Belfalas and Morthond under direct control by selecting a successor pliant to his will and killing off the rival heirs of their ruling houses. These assassinations must not be tied to Pelargir, lest they be revealed for what they are—the lawless acts of a tyrant. Conveniently, there is another power in Gondor which, for quite different reasons, also seeks the destruction of the line of Edhelion. This power is only too happy to oblige its services. What Castamir does not realize is that this power aims to annihilate the house of the Kings as well and that, by unwittingly consorting with it, he has brought the South-kingdom itself to the brink of disaster.

The power with which the King unknowingly consorts is the cult of Benish Armon (see Section 2.3.3). Castamir has long discussed with Colfen how his Ethir-outlaws (see Section 3.5.4) might be used to execute his designs against Belfalas, but Colfen has counseled another way. He persuaded the Usurper to turn the matter over to his sister Iriel, who has already "infiltrated" the Prince's house (see Section 2.3.3). The King remains uninformed as to the means of assassination at Iriel's disposal, but takes Colfen at his word that they will be both effective and "non-traceable" to Pelargir.

Castamir's wish is that the Prince of Morthond should die first, in order that Lord Morlaen will be able to occupy that fief with troops from Lamedon, and so place himself within striking range of Belfalas when the time for intervention arrives. During the ensuing chaos, Iriel will proceed to eliminate Prince Adrazôr and his sons. Finally, Neithan must also be slain, so that he will not press his claim to the inheritance of Morthond.

When all of this is accomplished, Prince Castaher will be sent with an army and a royal mandate to enforce the subordination of both fiefs to his rule. Only when all potentially legitimate successors are annihilated or neutralized can the Usurper hope to avoid a deadly confrontation with the mounted knights of Edhelion, who will adamantly resist any overt attempt to dispossess their liege. The only flaw in the Usurper's design is that his assassin has no intention of eliminating Neithan.

Iriel's "means" of assassination is the Kuilëondo, the sorcerous gem which binds the spirit of her master (see Section 2.3.3). With it, she will summon the cat-things of Benish Armon to infest and corrupt the flesh of their victims. Because this may only be done on a night of the black moon, Iriel will be constrained either to wait a month between her first and second summonings, or she will be forced to turn to other methods during the interim period. She is unable to destroy all five of her targets at once because they are in different geographical locations, and because the power needed to summon so many spirits would be beyond her skill.

Other factors hinder a single assault. The nature of her assassination method, while it does not point to the hand Pelargir by any stretch of the imagination, nevertheless draws attention to itself—far too much attention for Castamir's comfort, if he but knew of it. Moreover, Iriel must take thought for her own safety, and so must deflect any unnecessary suspicion from herself. This may depend in part on her continued association with Tirazôr, which will necessitate keeping him alive to the last.

Finally, although they will obviously refrain from doing away with Neithan, Colfen and Iriel must somehow fake his death in order to maintain the Usurper's confidence in their loyalty to his cause. This means that Iriel must eventually escape Lond Ernil and reach the Ethir. However the course of events dictates her subsequent actions, Iriel has been commanded to go first to Morthond, and there to eliminate Prince Maeglin. It is there in the Morthond-vale, beneath the haunted shadow of the Dwimmorberg, that this tale begins.

ESTEL'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

Princess Míriel of Morthond recently invited her brother Adrazôr and his family to celebrate the ninth birthday of her daughter Estel, and Iriel has seized upon this occasion to strike her first blow. Adrazôr and Giladan were constrained to decline the invitation in favor of weightier matters of government; Aradan and Tirazôr, on the other hand, have agreed to go, and Iriel will accompany them. Despite its seeming innocence, Estel's birthday party is but the facade for a deadlier affair: Aradan is being sought out for the loyalist cause.

A MESSENGER FROM THE NORTH

Far away in Rhovanion, the exiled Eldacar lays his plans for the liberation of Gondor from the clutches of the Usurper. He knows that the support of the Swan-knights of Edhelion will be decisive for victory, and seeks to contact them secretly in order to ensure their allegiance when his time arrives. Eldacar has entrusted this task to his loyal friend, Beren, who has come by secret ways over the passes of the White Mountains into Morthond, undetected by Castamir's men.

Beren had been a personal acquaintance of the Prince of Morthond before the outcome of the Kin-strife forced him to flee Gondor and, upon revealing himself to Maeglin, Beren discovered that both he and Aradan continued to harbor strong reservations about the Usurper. Beren was able to persuade Maeglin of Eldacar's chances of recovering the crown, and of his worthiness to rule the South-kingdom despite his less than pure lineage. After some debate, Prince Maeglin agreed to arrange a secret meeting between Beren and Aradan at his castle. He chose his daughter's birthday as a suitable excuse for inviting Aradan to Morthond.

Tirazôr's Scheming

Although Míriel's invitation was extended to Adrazôr and all of his sons, only Aradan was expected to respond. Maeglin knew that both Giladan and his father would be otherwise occupied, but he hardly thought that the reclusive and resolutely unfamilial Tirazôr would be willing (even under duress) to journey all the way to Morthond for his young cousin's birthday party. Maeglin suspects that Tirazôr's motives for accompanying his brother to Morthond are neither innocent nor disinterested, and fears that his presence may endanger the secrecy of the meeting between Beren and Aradan. Maeglin's fears are entirely justified, though he does not yet appreciate the peril that Tirazôr and his lady-companion represent to him and his family. Tirazôr, who desires to undo both of his brothers' hopes, has decided (at Iriel's suggestion) to play Aradan and Giladan off against each other by pretending friendship to both.

Iriel's Plan

In order to summon one of the cat-spirits from Benish Armon in the Ethir to the Prince's castle in Morthond, Iriel must perform a blood sacrifice. Through one of her spies in Lond Ernil, she has learned of the planned secret meeting with Aradan and Maeglin (though she knows nothing of its purpose or of Beren's presence). Rightly guessing that this meeting will take place by night following Estel's party, Iriel plans to sacrifice Maeglin's wife while he is away with Aradan—her screams will draw the Prince of Morthond to the place of her death, where the newly-summoned cat will be lurking. During the interim, Iriel will shape-shift into panther-form and escape unseen into the night (returning to her room and shifting back into human shape, before running to the Prince's chambers to see what all of the commotion is about). Tirazôr will have no suspicions about her involvement, since he will be out spying on Aradan at the time.

The Prophecy of the Dead

Soon after having arranged the meeting between Beren and Aradan, the Prince's sleep became troubled with a recurring dream. Maeglin dreamt that he stood beside the legendary Stone of Erech, where Isildur had cursed the Oathbreakers. The Dead appeared before him in the dream, speaking words to him, but he could not hear them. At the last, sensing that Doom had summoned him thither, Maeglin rode alone to the hill of Erech under the dying sliver of the waning moon; and the Dead came to him, but he was not afraid. They prophesied to him, saying:

> *"Take heed, Dúnadan, for the hour of thy end draws nigh. The Dead are troubled by this omen, for through you this thing would rob us of the blood of our redemption, by which alone we may one day find rest. But that blood now conspires against itself without seeing, and would work the will of this thing upon Morthond without knowing, unless it is hindered."*

These words were spoken to Maeglin on the night before Aradan and Tirazôr's arrival.

The Oathbreakers can only be released from their state of undeath by an heir of Elendil; Iriel and the Cult of Benish Armon therefore pose a threat, since their ultimate goal is to destroy not only the line of Edhelion, but also the line of the Kings (see Section 2.3.3). For this reason, the Dead sought to warn the Prince of his peril, though Maeglin did not understand that "through you" referred to "through your son, Neithan."

Perceiving that his death would tempt the Usurper to seize Morthond, the Prince resolved to produce a testament, stating that Aradan should be granted the Stewardship of the fief until his father, Adrazôr, should choose a successor to rule Morthond. Maeglin's will thus robs the King of the authority to impose his own rule over the Morthond-vale without the consent of the line of Edhelion. Maeglin intends to present this testament to Aradan during the meeting with Beren.

5.6.2 THE NPCS

One of the functions of this adventure is to introduce player-characters to prominent individuals, and many of the NPCs who make cameo appearances come from outside the adventure setting. A gamemaster may wish to include other NPCs from anticipated future adventures for the characters to encounter—especially at the funeral, which will draw individuals from the farthest corners of Gondor to Tolfalas.

Prince Maeglin (1264-1441†)

The aging Prince of Morthond is the seventh of his line, which was established by Gundor, son of Emeldir of the line of Edhelion, in the time of King Siriondil. Maeglin is, therefore, related to the line of Belfalas by blood as well as marriage. His union with the Lady Míriel of Lond Ernil was arranged by his father, Prince Tauron, and Adrazôr's father, Prince Tirkhôr, in the year 1342, with a view to strengthening the position of their fiefs against the growth of naval power in Pelargir.

Like Adrazôr, the Prince of Morthond had assumed a stance of neutrality towards the Kin-strife. He regards the Usurper with some disdain, and can afford to continue doing so as long as the knights of Edhelion remain under the control of Belfalas. Maeglin had opposed Valacar's choice of Eldacar as his heir during the final Council of Gondor before the outbreak of the civil war. With the blood of Ornendil on his own son's hands, however, Maeglin feels bound by honor to submit to Eldacar's rule in the eventuality of his return.

The evil actions of his wayward son have visited themselves upon Maeglin as a great burden, though he had sternly commanded Orodreth not to participate in the confederate rebellion. Maeglin feels particular shame towards Adrazôr, whose own subjects were persuaded to join the traditionalist cause under Orodreth's leadership.

Despite his pain and shame, Maeglin pities his son, who now calls himself "Neithan." He laments Neithan's self-imposed exile. After all, unless his son repents of his deeds and returns to Maeglin's house, Morthond is without a male heir to carry on the princely line.

In the absence of his son, Maeglin has devoted all of his love to his young daughter, which has made him more and more reclusive to the outside world. Still, he maintains close relationships with Adrazôr and all his family in Lond Ernil, and frequently entertains them in his castle (though he himself rarely ventures beyond the Morthond-vale in his old age).

At the age of one hundred and seventy-seven, Maeglin still retains some of his vigor, though much of his spirit has been diminished by the loss of his son and his fears of dying without a male heir to succeed his rule. His hair is now greying and his eyes old and tired. He often carries a wooden staff with him when he walks.

PRINCESS MÍRIEL (1346-1441†)

The Princess of Morthond was born the daughter of Tirkhôr of Belfalas. Proximity to her father's house—and continuing friendship between Belfalas and Morthond—brought her marriage much happiness, and she has come to love the flowering vale of Morthond as much as the seaward land of her childhood.

Like Maeglin, Míriel is greatly grieved at the loss of Orodreth her son, and yearns for his return. Unlike her husband, however, she sees no reason why the rule of Morthond should not come to their daughter Estel—after all, Númenor had its ruling Queens. Míriel also realizes that few would entertain such thoughts in the realm-in-exile, torn by vicious civil war; but far from dissuading her, this fact has driven the Princess to raise her daughter to be the equal of any man who might lay claim to Morthond, educating her in the politics of the fief from the age of seven.

Her husband's decline and withdrawal from the day-to-day rule of Morthond has encouraged Míriel to take a more active role in the government of the fief, and it was her success in this informal Stewardship which first brought into her mind the thought that her daughter's rule might be within the realm of possibility. The Princess has by no means usurped her husband's authority, to whom she refers all of her decisions; but Maeglin has become too preoccupied with Estel to raise any serious objections to her initiatives, and Míriel's practical wisdom has come to be much respected among the Prince's retainers.

Míriel shares in the longevity of her noble lineage, revealing no loss of vigor at ninety-five. She also shares the dark hair and sea-grey eyes common to the high men of Belfalas.

ESTEL (1432-1636)

On the eve of civil war, a daughter was born to the Prince of Morthond. She was named Estel, "Hope," to signify the wish for Gondor's salvation from its present division. Maeglin sought to protect her from the chaos that was breaking out all over Gondor, and kept her in the safety of Morthond during the Kin-strife. So it was that Estel never knew her older brother, Orodreth, who refused to see his family after the siege of Osgiliath.

Estel has occasionally visited her relatives at Lond Ernil, but she has never seen the outside world and understands little of it, despite Míriel's attempts to instruct her concerning the realm. Her mind is sharp, but she often finds it difficult to adapt to her mother's intensified efforts to prepare her for the eventuality of one day succeeding her father as the ruling Princess of Morthond. At times, Míriel's often rigorous demands give rise to resentment, since they deny to Estel her father's loving attentions.

But Estel has received more from her mother than an early education; within her stirs the True Sight of Westernesse, that grace which Uinen grants only to a single individual among each generation of Imrazôr's descendants. Estel sensed this gift when she first looked upon the Sea from Tirith Aear but, being only six years old at the time, she did not understand the wondrous vision she saw in the West. The Sight remains largely dormant in her, waiting for some catalyst to fully awaken it.

Estel shares with her cousin Lóthriel the rarity of golden hair, but in all other ways she is a perfect likeness of her mother.

BEREN (1417-1585)

The son of an executed loyalist from Minas Anor (see Section 7.3.1), Beren was forced to flee north to escape the Usurper's malice. He reached the sanctuary of Rhovanion in 1438, and there pledged himself to the cause of Eldacar. Because of Beren's familiarity with northern Gondor, the exiled King bade him to seek out others in Anórien and Calenardhon whose hatred for Castamir might drive them to lend Eldacar aid when the time for his return arrived.

The young Beren found little difficulty in fulfilling his King's command, for the lands to which he had been sent were those that suffered the greatest oppression from the Usurper. His bravery and devotion to Eldacar came to be matched by his clever skill in eluding Castamir's men, and under many guises Beren has journeyed to places as far-flung from Rhovanion as Osgiliath, Calmiriё, Ostiras and even Tharbad.

During these travels, it came into Beren's mind that he might hazard the passes of the White Mountains and come thus into southern Gondor, where lay the lands of the Princes. Beren's father had been of the line of Harnastin, which was distantly related by marriage to the previous Prince of Morthond, and he himself had known Maeglin as a child; Beren resolved, therefore, to put his trust in the memory of this kinship and seek out the allegiance of the Princes for the loyalist cause. Eldacar approved of this suggestion and sent him off to Morthond.

Beren is grim man with dark hair and penetrating eyes. He is tall and shares the powerful frame of his father, but dresses in such a way as to conceal his noble bearing. He moves under many aliases and disguises, but will reveal his true name to none save those in whom he trusts absolutely. In Morthond, he goes by the name of Anglin—a Dúnadan trapper from the mountains.

Aradan

Aradan is deeply troubled by Maeglin and Míriel's deaths, not only because of the political repercussions, but because he cannot explain what happened in Morthond—something deeper than political assassination is involved. He has heard legends of the Dead that haunt the vale, and of their ancient cults of darkness, but he cannot understand why the Prince and his wife became the object of such malice. Aradan also fears that the time of and place of the murders was too close to his secret meeting with Beren to have been mere coincidence, but he cannot conceive of Tirazôr or Iriel as being involved in something so dark. (See Section 5.4.4 for more details.)

Tirazôr

Tirazôr is genuinely terrified by the events in Morthond, despite his own amateurish ventures into the occult. He will say nothing of it to Giladan, claiming that he did not actually see what happened to Maeglin; instead, Tirazôr will tell Giladan of the meeting with Beren, and may even fabricate some scurrilous detail of their conversation which he claims to have heard—of Aradan's consorting with the men of Morthond to support his claim to the succession should Giladan ever challenge him. (See Section 5.4.4 for more details.)

Iriel

Iriel will escape all suspicion in Maeglin and Míriel's deaths, focusing attention instead on her feigned concern for Estel. She will volunteer no theories of the deaths to anyone—not even Tirazôr—since she claims to have missed the entire incident. Iriel may let a sliver of nervousness slip when confronted with Mórdulin's arrival at Lond Ernil. She secretly fears the latter's great skill in healing might reverse the veil she has cast on Estel, or at least permit him to suspect the true cause of the girl's muteness. This unease will grow, since Iriel will not be able to accompany them to Maeglin's funeral on Tolfalas. (See Section 2.3.3 for more details.)

Mórdulin

Mórdulin has not been among her family in Belfalas since the Kin-strife began, and misses them deeply. Mórdulin is a prisoner of war, under house arrest in Minas Anor, and was granted leave to travel to Belfalas only at the urgent bequest of Malbeth and Adrazôr combined. Officially, she is under the custody of her cousin Lórin, and must return to Minas Anor immediately following the funeral. Consequently, her desire to heal young Estel's malady will carry with it a great urgency. (See Section 7.4.4 for more details.)

Lórin

Lórin is the keeper of the Anor-stone, and as such is an officer of the King. He is, however, of a strong loyalist bent, and has long been aware of the movements of Eldacar's spies from the north (though he suppresses this information in his official reports). Lórin tracked Beren from Calenardhon to Morthond, and saw his meeting with Aradan and Maeglin. He also caught a glimpse of Maeglin's death while concentrating on the Palantír, and knows that something evil is afoot. It was through his (censored) report of Maeglin's murder that the royal seer convinced the reticent Castamir to allow him to bring his cousin Mórdulin to the aid of Estel, now possibly the only willing heir to her father's fief. (See Section 7.4.4 for more details.)

Castaher

When news came to Pelargir of Aradan's occupation of Morthond, Castamir purposed to send his son to demand the withdrawal of forces and the surrender of the fief to royal authority. The funeral on Tolfalas seemed the most appropriate occasion for doing so, since Castaher would be required to escort his wife to the funeral of her kinsman. Neither Castaher nor his father are aware of the testament which Maeglin bestowed upon Aradan before his death. (See Section 2.2.1 for more details.)

Lóthriel

Like her sister, Lóthriel has lived the last several years of her life as a hostage of Castamir, and has not been allowed to see any of her relatives since her marriage to Castaher. Accordingly, her attendance at the funeral will be accompanied by many desperate embraces of loved ones; it will also increase the tension between her love for her husband and her loyalty to her family, which may work to unbalance Castaher's diplomacy in dealing with Aradan. (See Section 2.2.1 for more details.)

NEITHAN

Although living in a state of self-imposed exile from his family and relatives, Neithan will attend his parents' funeral on Tolfalas. He will speak few words to anyone, and will not dare to look Mórdulin in the eyes. But Neithan is present not only to bid his father and mother farewell, but also to look upon his young sister, whom he has never seen. He will arrive at Tolfalas on The Calm before the Storm (an apt description of the funeral, in light of what is to follow). (See Section 2.3.3 for more details.)

PARMANDIL

The former Loremaster of Pelargir is a close friend of the Prince's family, and will preside over the interment of Maeglin and Míriel on Tolfalas at Adrazôr's request. He will take great concern for the comfort of those in mourning, and will question Aradan closely concerning the manner of Maeglin's death, though he himself will not likely be able to offer any insight into the event. The prophecy of the Dead will fascinate him to no end, and he will urge Aradan to consider what it may portend for the future of his father's house. (See Section 6.6.2 for more details.)

5.6.3 THE SETTINGS

Although the events of this adventure develop on the basis of PC and/or NPC interaction, in both Morthond and on Tolfalas the physical location of the characters may greatly affect what exactly they are able to witness and observe. It is therefore necessary for the gamemaster to be familiarized with the following detailed descriptions of Morthondost and of the Hallows of Imrazôr.

MORTHONDOST

Black-root Castle is a large fortress situated above the river Morthond, in northwestern Lamedon. The town of Erech lies below, on the east bank of the cool, dark river. Comprised of three distinct baileys, the citadel guards all of upper Lamedon, including Tarlang's Gap and the pass between Lamedon and Calenardhon.

At the time of the Usurper's reign, the Prince and his family reside in one of the towers that look upon the open Ward, which at this time contains a greensward with trees, walkways, and a central fountain. Two large octagonal towers occupy the outer corners of the Ward, and these contain the library and hall which were later to be resituated within the foundation of the Great House in the year 1568. These architectural differences dictate the logistics of Iriel's assassination attempt.

THE WARD (1)

The Ward of Morthondost is a garden courtyard surrounded by a ring of six towers linked by a twenty-five foot high wall. On five of its six segments, this wall is surrounded in turn by a moat, while its sixth segment, which is punctuated by a gate, separates the Ward from the rest of the castle grounds. From the gate to the back wall of the courtyard, the Ward measures one hundred and thirty feet, whereas its width is one hundred and fifty. The encircling walls are fifteen feet thick, with the exception of the gate segment, which is only ten. Stone stairways rising from the courtyard provide access to two segments of the wall, whereas the others may be reached from within the West and South Towers. All of the walls are crenelated on both sides.

The eaves of several evenly planted Alder trees overshadow the well-tended turf of the sward, which is divided by four pathways leading to a circular fountain. Another path follows the line of the ivy-covered walls in a circuit around the courtyard; each of the ground-level entrances to the towers open onto this path. Beds of flowers, herbs and shrubbery decorate the sward, affording many places to watch another while remaining unseen.

THE PRINCE'S TOWER (2)

Level I. The ground floor of this tower functions as a sitting room for the Prince and his family, and as an informal audience chamber for casual visitors.

Level II. The Prince and his family use this floor as a dining chamber for private meals. When it is not being used in this capacity, it becomes Maeglin's study.

Level III. Maeglin, Míriel, and Estel have their bedchambers adjacent to each other on this floor.

Level IV. A trap door seals the tower roof off from the living quarters of the Prince. There is a 50% chance that it will be locked at any time. Both Maeglin and his wardens possess keys for opening it.

THE WEST TOWER (3)

Levels I and II. The first two stories of this tower contain the castle library, the second level of which consists of a cat-walk balcony, which can be reached by the tower stairwell.

Level III. This floor contains three guest chambers, in one of which Iriel will be staying. The others will be empty unless occupied by visitors (e.g., player-characters).

Level IV. This level has two doorways that open out onto the adjoining wall segments. Unless the castle guard has been put on alert or given other special instructions, these doors are normally left unlocked. The floor also contains a storeroom with necessaries for the guest chambers (i.e., bed linen, extra blankets, etc.).

Level V. (Tower Roof.) The trap door remains unlocked when a guard is present (80% chance).

THE SOUTH TOWER (4)

Level I. This room functions as the Prince's formal reception chamber and feasting hall, and is generally used for all public occasions requiring space for large numbers of people. Estel's birthday celebration will take place here.

Level II. This floor contains the pantry and kitchens, which are generally occupied before, during, and after all functions taking place in the hall below (60% chance).

Level III. This floor contains three guest chambers, two of which will be occupied by Aradan and Tirazôr. A visitor might occupy the remaining room.

Level IV. Here, two doorways open onto the adjoining wall segments. These doors are normally left unlocked unless the castle guard has been put on alert. The floor also contains a storeroom with bed linen, extra blankets, etc. for the guest chambers.

Level V. Tower Roof. When a guard is present (80% chance), the trap door remains unlocked.

THE BUTTERY TOWER (5)

Level I. This floor contains the buttery of the castle.

Level II. This floor contains the head cook's quarters.

Level III. Three lesser cooks occupy rooms on this floor.

Level IV. Tower roof.

THE SMITH'S TOWER (6)

Level I. This floor contains the smithy and forge of the castle.

Level II. This floor is used as a residence for the castle smith.

Level III. This floor contains the bed chambers for the smith and his family.

Level IV. Tower roof.

THE GARRISON TOWER (7)

Note: *This structure is designated as the West Tower after 1568.*

Level I. This floor serves as a mess hall for the guard company of the castle.

Level II. This floor functions as the office and residence of the Prince's captain.

Level III. The Prince's two lieutenants have their bed chambers on this floor.

Level IV. Beren resides in this guest chamber, which gives him access to the Ward by way of the adjoining wall segment with stairs running down into the courtyard.

Level V. Tower roof. The trap door remains unlocked when a guard is present (80% chance).

THE HALLOW OF IMRAZÔR

The princely houses of Belfalas and Morthond inter their dead on the western coast of the isle of Tolfalas, where their ancestor Imrazôr the Númenórean constructed a tomb complex. This site is hallowed by the presence of an Oiolairë tree, whose life signifies the continuation of the Maia Uinen's covenant with the descendants of Imrazôr (see Section 5.4.1).

The Hallow is built into the solid rock of a volcanic cliff-face, beneath the base of which stretches the narrow beach of a small, protected cove. Large vessels are unable to take haven here, and there are no safe landings nearby, so that visitors must be rowed to shore in skiffs manned by local fishermen. There is no permanent habitation within several miles of the cove, and the Hallow itself is tended only prior to annual holy times by men of the Prince's household.

It is said that the Lady of the Waters guards this place, and will not suffer it to be profaned by impious hands. (Twice monthly the warden of the island sends a mounted patrol from Caras Tolfalas to see that the Hallow has not been violated, although there is little danger of this, for there are few in the realm of the Faithful who do not revere the memory of Imrazôr.)

5.6.4 THE TASK

The purpose of this adventure is to enable the characters to become eye-witnesses to the events on which "The Revolt of the Swan-knights" (see Section 5.7) is based. This adventure also makes it possible for the players to get a sense for the internecine politics and personal rivalries operative in Belfalas, and it familiarizes them with NPCs who may figure prominently in subsequent adventures (i.e., 4.8, 5.8, 6.8). Finally, it presents the characters with opportunities for personal interaction with the powerful of Gondor (including the Usurper's son and heir). The principal objective of the characters will therefore be to observe and interpret what is going on around them.

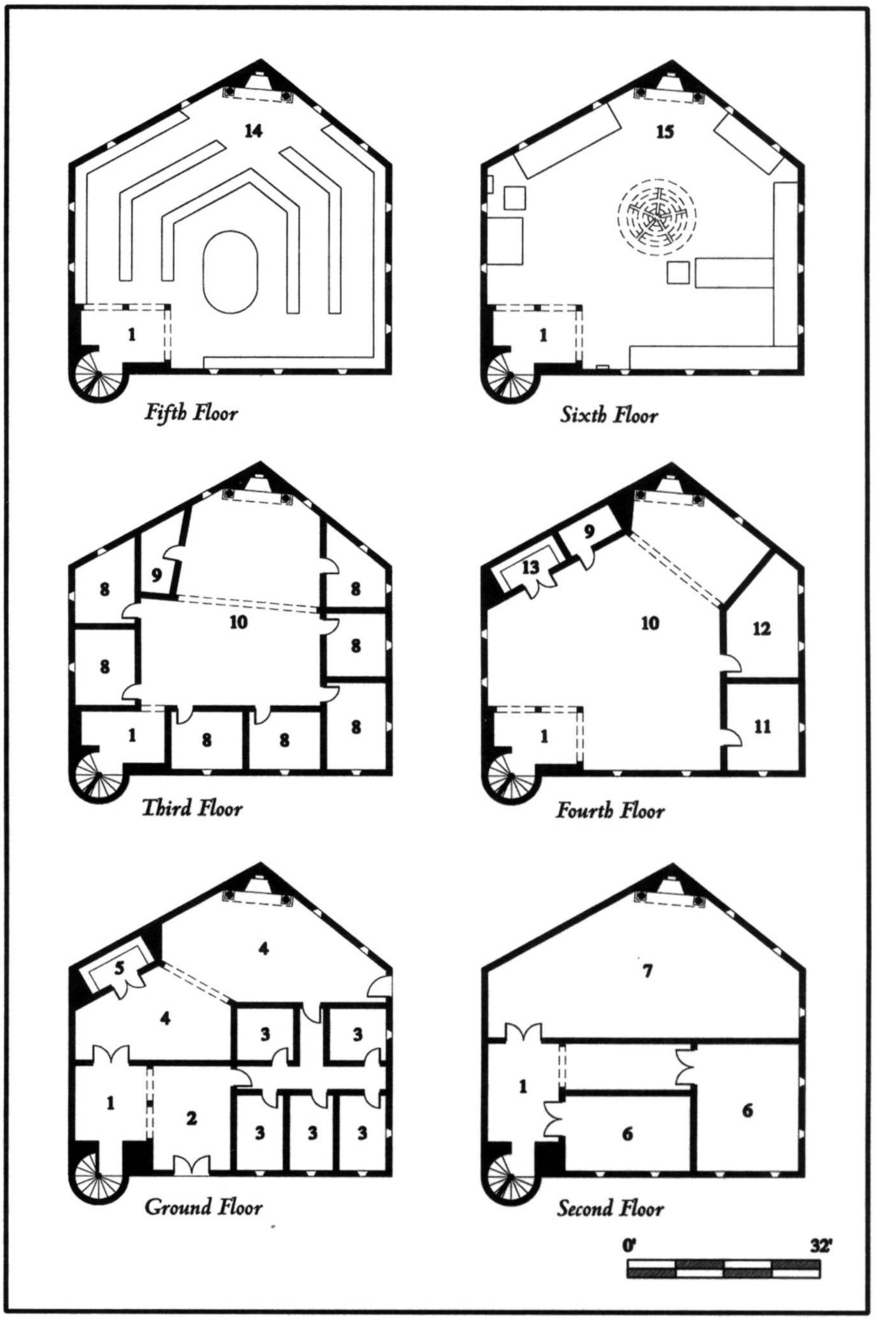
STARTING THE CHARACTERS

Player characters may be involved in the events of this adventure either in Morthond or on Tolfalas. In either case, they must be somehow linked to one of the primary NPCs. Only relatives or close friends of the family will be invited to Estel's birthday party, whereas attendance of the funeral will be open to any who wish to pay their respects to the deceased (though complete strangers will, of course, be kept at a formal distance from the principal actors of the drama). Whatever their background or motivation, the gamemaster should place the characters in such a position that they will be expected (or invited) to return to Lond Ernil after the funeral—otherwise much of what they might have witnessed will have been meaningless.

The underlying motive for character observation and/or involvement in Morthond and Tolfalas should be their feeling of solidarity with the line of Edhelion. Alternately, one or more of the characters might be spies for the King, or for one of the rival brothers. Characters who witness any aspect of Maeglin's unnatural death will (if they do not withdraw in terror) fervently desire to uncover the true nature of this horrible threat to the Faithful, regardless of their political persuasion. On the other hand, the political repercussions of the Prince's death should generate sufficient concern for loyalist and traditionalist alike to involve themselves with what comes to pass.

House of Shining Mist Key

1. Stair to view platform on roof
2. Entry Hall
3. Servant's Quarters
4. Kitchen / Workplace
5. Larder
6. Private Dining Room
7. Feast Hall
8. Guest Room
9. Privy
10. Sitting Room
11. Bedroom
12. Study
13. Storage
14. Library
15. Occult Laboratory (skylight above)



House of Shining Mist

Aids

Because the substance of this adventure transpires for the most part at the level of PC-NPC interaction, "success" is usually concomitant upon being in the right place at the right time. The mysterious deaths of Maeglin and Míriel, and the madness of Estel may permit some investigation, but at this stage the characters are not likely to learn much.

Obstacles

The main obstacle to interpreting the events is the fact that most of the characters will probably not be entirely privy to the reasons for the personal conflicts they may witness (especially on Tolfalas). A second obstacle to explaining what happened in Morthond will be that the person who knows the most (Iriel) will strive to misguide and dissuade the characters' investigations. Estel's incommunicability, of course, makes it impossible to adequately question the only real witness to the murders.

Outcomes

The player-characters are more likely to have an impact on the course of events on Tolfalas than they are in Morthond (unless by some strange chance they are able to prevent Maeglin and Míriel's deaths, in which case the funeral gathering will not take place at all). If the characters enjoy a position of influence in Belfalas or Pelargir, the gamemaster might encourage them to actively mediate the inevitable tensions which will arise between Aradan and Castaher. If they prove effective, they may be petitioned to return with the Prince to Lond Ernil in order to continue negotiations.

If Iriel completely succeeded in her assassination attempt, she will have evaded any suspicion and will therefore be in a position to continue with her plan unabated. If, on the other hand, the characters cast wary eyes on her (for whatever reason), she will strive to deflect further attention by working through Tirazôr or her dependents in Lond Ernil to shift their gaze towards the Giladan-Aradan conflict. If she believes that she is being too closely watched by her enemies, Iriel will not risk another sacrifice to summon one of the cats against Adrazôr, but will instead attempt to eliminate him through "conventional" means alone (see Section 5.7.1). This will introduce untimely delays into her plans, but Iriel is in no hurry.

5.6.5 ENCOUNTERS

The sequence of events will probably not be altered by the player-characters, since its motive factors are generally beyond their control or understanding. These encounter descriptions emphasize perception skills for reading NPC interaction or anticipating what it might precipitate. The days given refer to the phases of the moon (see Section 10.3.1), and may be assigned dates as needed. The gamemaster, however, should observe that the chronology of this adventure is closely bound up with that of sections 5.7, 5.8, and 6.8, the last of which depends upon a specific date (see Section 6.8). Depending on whether the gamemaster intends to run these scenarios as a connected chain, he or she may wish to calculate the timeline of this adventure accordingly.

Estel's Birthday Party (Day 1: evening)

Despite Aradan's misgivings about Tirazôr's presence, the birthday celebration will be a joyous occasion. Estel will ask her father's guests all about what is happening in the outside world, though she will not always understand the complexities of what she is told. Estel will want to visit with her cousins into the night, but her mother will take her away early to put her to bed. Iriel, too, will make the appearance of turning in early, leaving the men to talk among themselves. After further conversation late into evening, the Prince and his guests will retire. Beren will not show his face at all during the celebration.

The Secret Meeting (Day 1: night)

A few hours later, Maeglin, Beren, and Aradan will quietly leave their rooms and meet in the garden courtyard of the keep. Tirazôr will hear them leave and follow behind unseen, keeping to the shadows of the trees. He will see the Prince hand something to his brother (his last will and testament), but before he is able to get close enough to hear what they are saying to each other, Míriel's scream from the Prince's bed chamber will recall the three men at once to the keep. Maeglin had had only enough time to introduce Beren to Aradan, and to recount the prophecy of the Dead to them, when he hears his wife's cry.

The Prince's Death and Estel's Madness (Day 2: midnight)

Iriel assumes panther-form, and stalks the walls of Morthondost, silently killing the soldier standing guard on the roof of the Prince's tower. Resuming human shape, Iriel steals her way into Maeglin and Míriel's bed-chamber. She draws forth a ceremonial knife and prepares to slay the sleeping Princess silently, but Estel stirs from slumber and shrieks a desperate warning to her mother—too late.

Míriel is sacrificed, screaming and writhing under Iriel's blade. Swiftly, the Ethir priestess draws forth the Kuilëondo and summons one of the cats and, turning upon Estel, unveils the naked visage of Tevildo her lord, driving her to madness and darkening her memory, so that she can never reveal what she has beheld (see "Tevildo's powers," Section 2.3.3). Then, with the sounds of hurried footsteps in the hallway, Iriel escapes, leaping out of a tower window in panther shape, and returning to her room unmarked by any.

Maeglin, Aradan, and Beren arrive on the scene, and Tirazôr sneaks to the edge of the doorway, peaking in. The Prince rushes towards the cruelly slain form of his beloved wife, only to be struck in mid-stride by the ethereal shape of a spectral cat-thing, materializing out of thin air. Aradan, Beren and the still-hidden Tirazôr watch with horror as the luminescent shape enters into the body of the Prince, knocking Maeglin back upon the stone floor of the chamber. The hapless Prince struggles in agony for a few brief moments, almost as though ripped from within by raking claws, and then goes limp (the fall broke his neck). The Prince of Morthond is dead.

At this point, Tirazôr hears the footsteps of his frightened mistress climbing the stairwell of the tower to discover the source of the screams. He enjoins her to say nothing about his being their prior to her, and together they rush into the room, both of them (unbeknownst to the other) feigning shock. Iriel immediately runs to embrace a terrified and speechless Estel, hiding her eyes from the carnage. No one in the room will move or speak for many long moments. Beren, seeing the suspicious Tirazôr, will silently absent himself from the room, conversing with Aradan only in secret afterwards.

It will soon be discovered, when Aradan seeks to learn what has happened, that Estel has apparently lost the ability to form words, as though dumb. She is too much in shock to communicate in any way with anyone around her. Aradan will send word of this to his cousin Mórdulin, the healer in Minas Anor (see Section 7.4.4), in the hopes that she might be able to cure the girl.

After the Prince's Death (Day 2-25)

If Iriel's assassination attempt succeeds, Maeglin and Míriel will be prepared for burial on Tolfalas, where the Hallows of the line of Edhelion are situated. The embalming process, which will be carried out in Morthond, normally takes a fortnight to complete. Maeglin's infestation by the cat, however, will cause his corpse to decompose and harden into a hideous statue, which will confound (and horrify) the embalmers and delay the completion of the burial preparations (see "Tevildo's powers," Section 2.3.3). As a consequence, the funeral on Tolfalas will take place approximately one month after the Prince's death, which will give Iriel time to perform another blood sacrifice to summon one of the cat-spirits. Her next victim will be Prince Adrazôr himself.

During the interim, news of Maeglin's death will reach Pelargir, and Castamir will order troops from Lamedon to occupy the fief. But Aradan, foreseeing this power-play, will muster the Swan-knights to block all roads leading into the Morthond-vale, and to refuse entrance to any bearing arms until the conditions of Maeglin's testament have been carried out. Unwilling to challenge the knights of Edhelion without further instructions from the Usurper, Lord Morlaen will inform the King of the turn of events and await Castamir's reply.

Castamir will be furious at Aradan's apparent sedition, and will muster several companies from Lebennin to Calembel in anticipation of open conflict. But the King has no desire to initiate a blood bath whose outcome—if he were victorious—would only lead to the destruction of the nobility which he so craves to control; therefore, Castamir will send his son Castaher to confront Aradan at the funeral on Tolfalas in order to ascertain the true motives for the latter's rebellion. How surprised Castaher will be when he learns the contents of Maeglin's will!

Mórdulin's and Lórin's Arrival (Day 27)

Having secured the Morthond-vale with the cavalry, Aradan will return with Tirazôr, Iriel, and Estel to Belfalas, bearing the bodies of the deceased to Lond Ernil. Two days after their arrival, they will be joined by Mórdulin and her cousin Lórin from Minas Anor, who have come to attend the funeral and to seek a cure for Estel. After examining the still-frightened girl, Mórdulin will perceive that some willful malice has cast a shroud over her memory, and perhaps also constrained her from speaking.

Mórdulin asks that she be allowed to bring Estel with her back to Minas Anor, to the Houses of Healing where she can be properly looked after for her recovery. To this Adrazôr will assent, though the funeral must come first. The Prince himself will be unable to attend the ceremony on Tolfalas, due to the responsibilities of the situation created by Aradan's actions. Still, all three of the brothers will go to Tolfalas. Iriel will remain behind to work her mischief. The party leaves later that same day on one of the Prince's vessels, bound for the Hallow of Imrazôr on the western coast of Tolfalas. The voyage will take three days.

The Interment Ceremony (Day 30: mid-day)

Aradan, Giladan, Tirazôr, Mórdulin, Lórin, and Estel will arrive on the island with Maeglin and Míriel's bodies. At the beach they will be met by Lord Duranil, the Warden of Tolfalas, with a company of men from Caras Tolfalas. He will express his condolences for the families of the deceased and place his men at Aradan's disposal for preparing the Hallow.

Soon after their arrival, two other vessels will drop anchor in the cove: "The Almarian" and "The Calm Before the Storm." From the first will come Prince Castaher and his wife Lóthriel; from the second will come Neithan and the loremaster Parmandil, who is to preside over the interment of the dead. After Parmandil greets all of the family members, he will ask to be shown the bodies of the deceased. Meanwhile, Castaher will insist on having words with Aradan. Neithan will seek out his sister Estel, who will lead him to view their parents.

Castaher will confront Aradan on the matter of his occupation of Morthond against the will of the King, demanding that he recall the knights of Edhelion to Belfalas. Aradan, however, will (to everyone's surprise) produce Maeglin's last will and testament. After reading it, Castaher resolves to return to Pelargir following the funeral, to inform his father of this development.

Mórdulin will relinquish Estel to Neithan's care unwillingly, too torn with feelings of rage and pity towards her cousin to confront him. When Estel looks upon her brother, she will be able to speak again (though she will not remember the events of her parent's deaths). Her recovery of speech will amaze all present who are aware of her condition.

The interment ceremony commences with some brief words by Parmandil concerning the Faithful view of death, followed by a recounting of the lives of the deceased. Next, a bough will be cut from the Oiolairë tree, and Estel will be asked to place it on her mother's breast, signifying Uinen's covenant with Míriel's family. Finally, the men will bear the bodies on biers to their final resting place in the Hallow.

The ceremony will be concluded by a hymn to the Lady of the Waters. After farewells, the funeral party will return to their ships. Aradan, Giladan, and Tirazôr will sail back to Lond Ernil, while Mórdulin and Lórin will bring Estel back on The Almarian, whence they will return from Pelargir to Minas Anor. Neithan will return to the Ethir and Duranil to Caras Tolfalas.

Adrazôr is Infested (Day 31)

A cat-spirit enters Adrazôr's person. (See Section 5.7.1, Day 1, for more information.)

5.7 ADVENTURE: REVOLT OF THE KNIGHTS

The Prince of Morthond is dead, and his killer now turns upon the line of Edhelion. But the castle of the Prince in Lond Ernil presents new obstacles and new dangers for the assassin. Iriel's task will only be fulfilled when the whole of Belfalas is in turmoil and vulnerable to the Usurper's designs. And then she must escape.

5.7.1 A TALE OF PRINCES AND PANTHERS

While his relatives are away at Maeglin and Míriel's funeral, Iriel uses the night of the dark moon to summon one of the cats of Benish Armon to infest Adrazôr. The Prince of Belfalas, however, is a man still possessed of the fullness of his vigor, and his spirit will not be so easily overcome as that of the aging Maeglin. But Iriel cannot afford to wait for the infestation to take its course—she has the assassination of three young princelings to worry about. Consequently, she has resolved to quicken Adrazôr's demise through more "conventional" means. This, however, will increase the danger of discovery for her.

Over the three years that she has lived in Lond Ernil, Iriel has acquired several "helpers"—through blackmail or drug-induced dependency—whom she will now call upon to assist her in hastening Adrazôr's death and in turning his sons against one another. The roles that each of these helpers are to play have been carefully planned and coordinated by Iriel, so as to produce exactly the reactions she desires.

The most important of Iriel's helpers is Ioreth, because she is Prince Adrazôr's personal physician and so will be near to him if he becomes incapacitated. Ioreth is to administer small doses of a deadly poison to the Prince, which will finish him off in less than a fortnight. Iriel believes that no one who learns of the fantastic circumstances of Adrazôr's infestation will bother to think of poisoning as a cause of death.

Another of Iriel's helpers is Harwen, a prostitute of the haven well-known to the less chivalrous members of Lond Ernil's garrison. She is to approach Giladan with a rumor (purportedly learned in the course of her latest tryst) that Aradan has aspirations of rallying the nobility of Belfalas to the military aid of "the King" in North Ithilien, as soon as Adrazôr dies and Aradan can claim his title for himself. This rumor will be "independently" confirmed by Salkhôr, another helper, two days later.

A similar story will be told to Aradan by another one of Iriel's servants. This helper, posing as one "Elmir the Verderer" from Castle Amrûnaur, will relate to the Cavalry Captain how he happened upon an ill-fated messenger from Lond Ernil, who bore with him three parchment scrolls in Giladan's hand (a forgery) telling of an overture to Castamir to support the Chamberlain as Prince against his brother's claim. Included with the text of a proposed alliance with the Usurper was a list of all suspected loyalists in Belfalas (a list including Aradan's name).

Iriel will wait for these scandalous tales, reinforced by the Prince's death, to ignite one of the two brothers to eliminate or neutralize the other. She will kill the remaining one in panther-form (since the next dark moon will not yet have arrived). Throughout her deceptions, Iriel will hold the trust of Tirazôr as her personal security, but once she is free of the haven and her work is done there, he too will become her prey. When Adrazôr and all three of his sons lie dead, Iriel will flee Belfalas and return to Benish Armon in the Ethir, to reveal to Neithan his true destiny as the last male heir to the lines of Belfalas and Morthond.

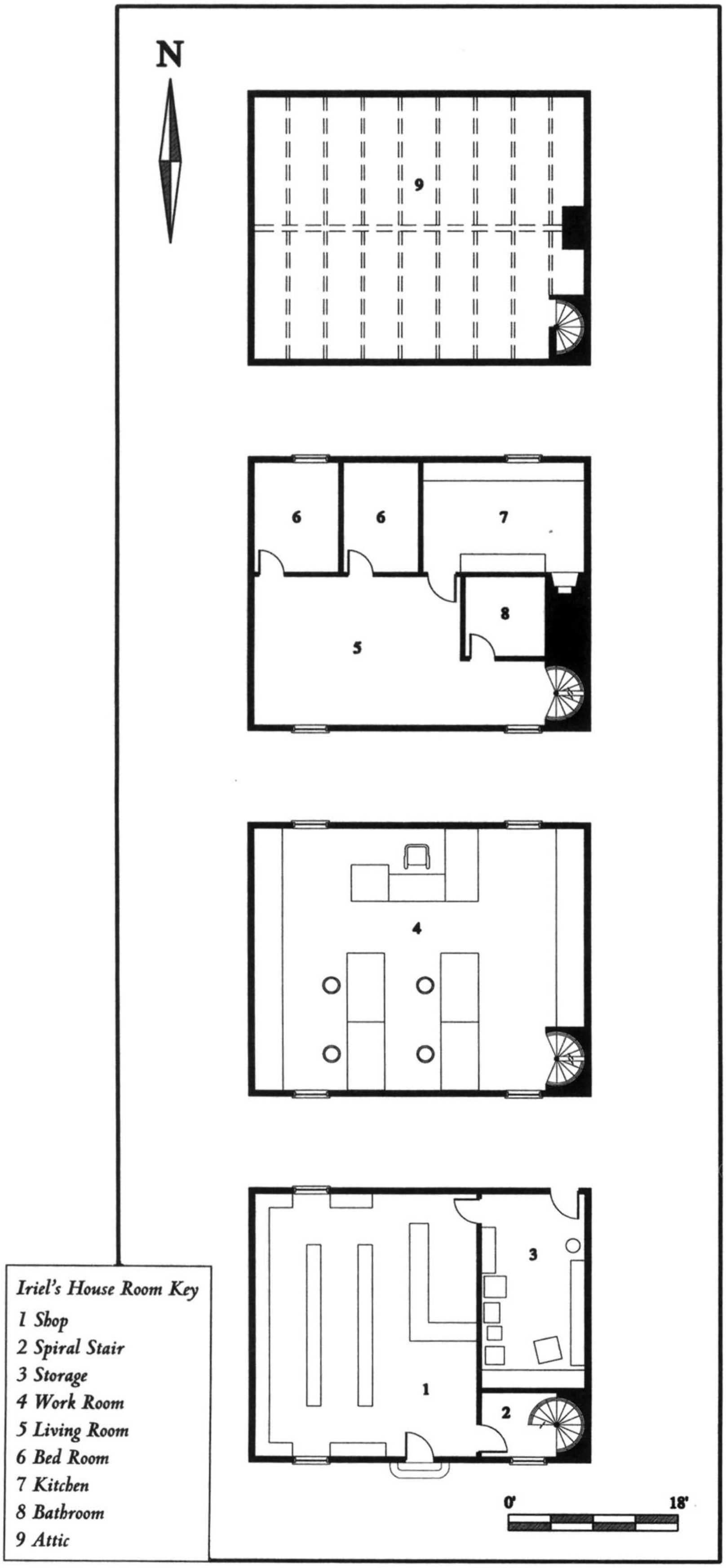
5.7.2 THE NPCS

IRIEL

Iriel will stalk her victims in panther shape and attempt to slay them one by one by ambush. Iriel has many informants in the haven, so it is reasonably easy for her to monitor the characters' movements, and Ioreth will supplies her with information on the characters' sleeping quarters and actions inside the castle walls. Iriel is a very competent hunter and does not risk her own life, so she will only attack under optimal circumstances.

Note: *Since it is forbidden to carry military equipment, including armor, in Lond Ernil, a character will not have the advantage of heavy weapons when encountering Iriel.*

Although she prefers to kill on her own, Iriel may hire thugs to do the job if necessary. If the opportunity presents itself, she may also try to frame the characters for one of her murders. If the characters were arrested, they would be out of the way while her schemes reach their completion.



Iriel's House

If the players suspect Iriel, they may try to find her. However, that will prove difficult. She may not be at home, since she moves around in the haven to talk to her many informants. If she discovers any pursuit, she will try to evade it; she only fights if there is no way of escaping or if it is necessary to save her plans. The drugs Iriel employs are stashed away in a hidden cache in the countryside near the haven. When dealing in drugs, Iriel carries her "stock" hidden in her clothing.

Iriel will behave politely to inquiring characters, but will feign innocence of any involvement in the affairs of Belfalas. Characters who intimate her liaison with the Prince's son will be rightly reproached for their lack of discretion, though Iriel will make no attempt to deny this if pressed. (See Section 2.3.3 for more information.)

ARADAN

After reading the documents supposedly written by his brother, Aradan will spend most of his time with his senior officers, seeking to discover which are devoted to him, which are not, and which are reporting to Galbar. Suspicion and doubt have robbed him of sleep, and characters who approach him are likely to find Aradan temperamental and dismissive of their inquiry. He will discuss nothing of his father or brothers with them. (See Section 5.4.4 for more information.)

GILADAN

The Chamberlain will forego all obligations to his guests, claiming preoccupation with his father's condition. He may invite them to dine with him, but will for the most part leave characters to their own devices. Giladan is uninterested in disclosing anything about his current relations with Aradan, and will politely evade the subject unless presented with a convincing refutation of his suspicions (in which case he will be most attentive). If persuaded that the charge against Aradan is unfounded, Giladan may seek reconciliation. (See Section 5.4.4 for more information.)

TIRAZÔR

Tirazôr will remain unaware of Iriel's involvement in the deaths of his father and brother, and she alone he will trust to the end. Anyone who questions Tirazôr about the deaths will receive in return ambiguity and incomprehensible parables, concluded by a polite demand that he be left alone. Because he is unaware of Iriel's machinations, Tirazôr will possess little that could be of use in any case. (See Section 5.4.4 for more details.)

IORETH (1416-1441†)

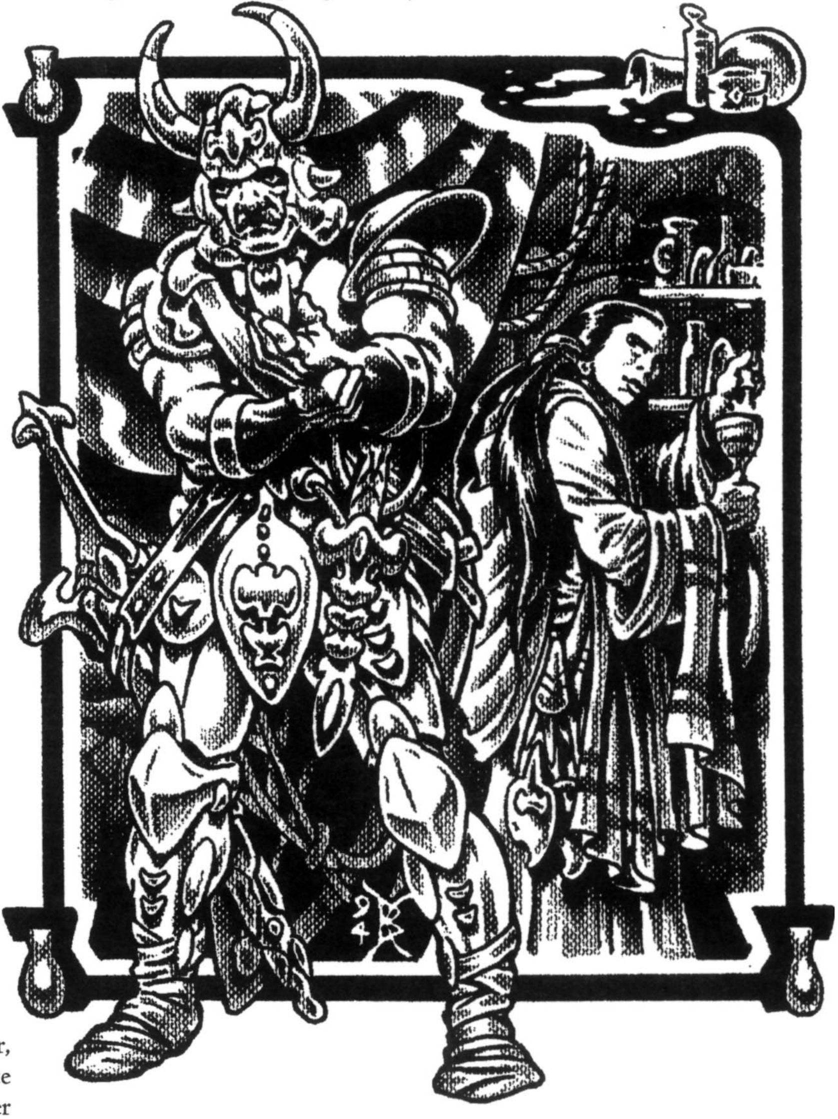
Ioreth is Adrazôr's physician. Before entering into the service of the Prince, she worked with her parents at a nearby estate. Ioreth was brought to the castle by Perion in 1436, and fell under Iriel's influence some two years later. Iriel befriended the lonely girl, in the hopes of using her to get at the Prince. Too trusting of the elder, more decisive woman, Ioreth allowed Iriel to introduce her to the use of addictive drugs, which now make her entirely dependent on the Ethir priestess' will.

Only a few people in Lond Ernil know of Ioreth's contact with Iriel—Perion, Tirazôr, and a few castle servants—but none of these know about her dependency on the latter. Despite this absence of suspicion, Iriel intends to "silence" Ioreth permanently before leaving the haven, so that no one will ever be able to determine the true cause of Adrazôr's death.

Ioreth is a pretty, but shy, woman with long black hair and brown eyes. She will do or believe whatever Iriel says. She is dressed in the simple attire of a castle servant.

HARWEN (1419-1441†)

Harwen is a prostitute well-known among Lond Ernil's soldiery, who plies her trade in the rowdy taverns of the Gate Town. Iriel ensnared her with drugs, which she supplies to Harwen in exchange for favors. Normally, this entails simply acting as an informant for Iriel, relaying to her all the secrets her patrons tell her. Now, however, Harwen was forced to lie to Giladan about her evening conversation with the esquire, Borgil (who had said nothing about Aradan going to war).



Ioreth poisons the Prince

Inquirers will find little difficulty in learning of Harwen's whereabouts, since many of Giladan's guards have availed themselves of her services and will have recognized her (though they were rather surprised that the Chamberlain of Belfalas would have allowed a woman of her character to enter his chambers). A few coins in a tavern-keeper's greasy palm will buy Harwen's address.

Harwen's drug-addiction leaves her susceptible to mood swings, which makes her demeanor rather unpredictable. Harwen's fancy attire makes her easy to spot in public, though she presents a somewhat disheveled appearance. She can be irritable if approached for information without money forthcoming.

BORGIL (1406-1523)

Borgil is a young esquire of the Prince's Guard, who has (on occasion) enjoyed the company of the prostitute Harwen. This, however, is rather undignified for a young noble aspiring to be a knight, and Borgil will take offense at the suggestion unless he is confronted with damning evidence. Discovery of such an indiscretion by one of Borgil's knightly superiors could lead to disciplinary action, the threat of which will prompt him to confess his deeds. The esquire, however, will adamantly deny making any of the statements that Harwen has attributed to him, finding them both outrageous and insulting: *"Should I talk military matters with a prostitute? What do you think I am—a Daen?"*

Borgil is a man of outward formality and discretion, and is always cautious to avoid acting disrespectfully towards his betters. He proudly displays his family's crest on his surcoat, and dresses in his full esquire uniform when in public.

"ELMIR" (1422-1468)

The man who presented himself to Aradan as "Elmir the Verderer" is, in fact, a trapper from among the Mountain Folk, who has done many jobs for Iriel. He speaks fluent Westron and can easily pose as an ordinary Gondorian. After leaving Lond Ernil, he returned to his home clan-hold, where he could hardly be traced by outsiders. He does not, in any case, know the contents of the documents he presented to Aradan.

As for the real Elmir, there is indeed a Verderer of that name stationed at Castle Amrûnaur, but anyone who asks will discover that he has been away on patrol, and will not return for some weeks. On the other hand, if the "Elmir" who visited Aradan is described to members of the Amrûnaur garrison, his friends will claim that the description does not match the Elmir they know.

SALKHÔR (1397-1478)

Salkhôr is a long-time servant of Aradan's. Iriel discovered that Salkhôr was given to somewhat unusual (and, to the Prince's house, highly objectionable) sexual habits, and threatened to blackmail the man unless he would lie to Giladan about his brother. Still terrified about the prospect of having his name slandered, Salkhôr will waste no time in buying a horse and departing Lond Ernil permanently.

Salkhôr is a middle-aged man of mixed blood and appearance. His long experience in the service of the Prince's house have given Salkhôr "higher" manners and etiquette than is usual for one of his rank and station. His current plight, however, has made Salkhôr less restrained in his dealings with others.

PERION (1393-1441†)

Perion is Chief Servant of the Prince's castle, which makes him responsible for all of Prince Adrazôr's personal servants. Perion has shown much skill in this, being the son of castle servants. He is much appreciated by Adrazôr's family and castle staff. Perion was appointed Chief Servant in 1429.

Perion is a balding, grey-haired man with gentle and diplomatic manners and perceptive eyes. Perion has spent his whole life in the castle, and knows everything about its layout and its servants.

LIEUTENANT HALBARAD (1396-1480)

Halbarad is Lieutenant of the Cavalry under Aradan, and is a household knight, bound in loyalty to the Prince's service since childhood. Halbarad dislikes drawing the limelight upon himself, preferring to work on behalf of his Captain and Prince discreetly. Eight years in the office of Lieutenant, however, have sometimes forced Halbarad to assume a more public role.

Halbarad is a tall and wiry man with a balding head. His face is adorned by a long and thin mustache, giving him a non-Dúnadan look. His grey eyes are penetrating.

5.7.3 THE SETTINGS

Although the majority of the action of this adventure takes place within the confines of the Prince's castle (see Section 5.2.3), characters suspicious of either Iriel or Tirazôr may attempt to explore their residences in the haven (CL5 and CQ3 respectively). Iriel's four-story house contains nothing of any real interest, since she is far too clever to keep anything there that could implicate her. Characters who choose to investigate Tirazôr's house without his knowledge may discover obvious evidence of his evil research, if they manage to open the iron door to the sixth floor. (The lock is sophisticated and very hard to pick.) The rest of the house does not contain anything remarkable.

Following his proclamation on Day 14, Tirazôr orders his servants to prepare Tirith Aear as his new residence, but leaves one servant, Dior, to take care of the House of Shining Mist. Characters who choose to investigate Tirazôr's residence that day after 10 a.m. will find Dior alone in the house. Iriel arrives at 1:30 p.m., spends some ten minutes preparing her bait, and dispatches Dior with the parchments to Halbarad around 1:40 p.m.. Dior returns to the house forty minutes later, and is immediately slain by Iriel in panther-form. Iriel then departs in human shape. During the afternoon and evening, there are no visitors to the house.

5.7.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to uncover Iriel's deceptions and to support one of the parties seeking to control the destiny of Belfalas: Aradan, Giladan, or Tirazôr. If the player-characters are clever enough, they may even foil the Iriel's sinister scheme, and so save Belfalas from division by preventing Tirazôr's coup. Should they fail to hinder this, they will still have the opportunity of helping to depose him. Prince Adrazôr is going to die, with or without the poison; the real focus of events will rather be the growing tension between Giladan and Aradan. Iriel has planned her coup thoroughly, but much can go wrong in a conspiracy.

STARTING THE CHARACTERS

Characters may enter this adventure in one of two ways. If they are residents of Lond Ernil having regular contact with the Prince's sons, they will have no trouble getting involved, especially if they are part of the Prince's Guard or the castle garrison. If this is not the case, the most convenient occasion for their presence in Lond Ernil would be their attendance of Maeglin's funeral on Tolfalas (in which case, they would arrive at the castle on Day 7 to find Adrazôr already stricken by Iriel's sorcerous allies).

AIDS

The main clues to unraveling Iriel's plot are the "helpers" she has sent to Aradan and Giladan. If the characters are not already aware of these visitations, Perion, the Prince's worried Chief Servant, will confide in them. He, however, will be killed by Iriel that same night. Iriel and Tirazôr initially remain unaware of Perion's confiding with the characters, unless the latter have openly revealed something.

OBSTACLES

The main obstacle to uncovering Iriel's machinations is the unwillingness of many of those who are involved to disclose any information, especially to strangers. If they work slowly or go astray in their investigations, events will overtake them and they will suddenly be enmeshed in a major crisis. In the absence of any legal means of compulsion, investigating characters will have to rely on persuasion, whether by smooth words, verbal threats, monetary bribes, or physical coercion. Perion can suggest which of the servants they should talk to, but does not suspect any of his colleagues among the Prince's own servants of foul deeds.

The more questions the characters ask, the more likely it will be that Iriel will receive word of their investigations. Iriel's plans are close to completion, and she will not tolerate any outsiders' attempts to disrupt them. If she feels them to be a threat to her plans, Iriel may attempt to eliminate the characters.

OUTCOMES

The revolt can end in several different ways. One possibility is a complete disaster, caused by betrayal. Beregond may have been informed of the knights' plans, giving him time to prepare his soldiers for a counterstrike. Under such circumstances, the revolt will fail abysmally. A complete success, which achieves all four goals, is unlikely (see "The Revolt Begins," Section 5.7.5).

It is especially improbable that all the soldiers of the garrison will be neutralized. Rather it is more likely that there will be several clashes in and around the castle. The most probable outcome is somewhere between disaster and complete success. The knights succeed with some objectives, but run into problems with others. Beregond may rally a force of men-at-arms and yeomen and provoke fighting in one of the baileys. Riots could start in the city proper when the populace rebels against Tirazôr. There is arson, street-fighting, plundering, and a general breakdown of law and order.

If Aradan is liberated and victorious, nobody will be charged for the events of the night. Since Iriel's forged letters casts suspicions on Beregond's loyalties, the Warden will have a hard time proving his innocence. He may well be discharged from his post. Should both Aradan and Tirazôr perish in the revolt, the line of Edhelion will be without a male heir and the fate of Belfalas will be decided by the Council of Gondor.

Castamir may use the incident as a pretext to increase his control of Dor-en-Ernil. For instance, he will place royal army units at strategic locations "to safeguard the lines of communication between Anfalas and Lebennin." He will also place "liaison officers" at Lond Ernil and Castle Amrûnaur "to coordinate the military forces of the realm," but in fact to monitor the Prince's forces. Côr Aran will increase its activities the fief and at least one more cell will established in Lond Ernil.

Characters who thwart Iriel's conspiracy and save Lond Ernil from the Usurper's intervention may well receive a rich reward. Those of sufficient social standing will be knighted, while those of lower social standing will each receive a heavy purse. The future Prince and his family will also feel indebted to the characters in other ways; if the characters ask a close relative of the Prince for help in an honorable cause—even many years in the future—they will most likely receive it. They will also always be welcome guests at the Prince's castle. If the characters fail in their task, they may suddenly end up as participants in the revolt of the knights.

If the characters actively support the winner, they will be handsomely rewarded with gold and perhaps a mansion somewhere in Belfalas. However, the victor will treat his supporters according to his personality. Aradan will consider himself indebted to them for many years to come. Tirazôr will be fickle, and his promises are not to be trusted.

5.7.5 ENCOUNTERS

Adrazôr is infested at midnight of Day 1 following the Day 30 of Section 5.6.5 (the night of the dark moon). Iriel will sacrifice one of her "helpers" in her house that evening, summoning one of the cats with the victim's blood and the Kuilëondo, and directing it towards the Prince's bed chamber. Perion and many of the other servants in the keep will be roused by the Prince's anguished cries as the cat-thing begins to maul his insides.

Adrazôr will be found lying unconscious on the floor of his room. There will be no outward trace of hurt or injury, but he will be burning with a fever. Only characters who were present in Morthond at Maeglin's death will recognize the cause. Perion will order the Prince moved to Celeborn's Hall in Tirith Aear (see # 17, Section 5.2.4), where Ioreth will tend to him. That night, Ioreth will administer to Adrazôr the first dose of poison. Until caught, the Prince will receive one dose per day until he dies.

Aradan, Giladan, and Tirazôr Return from Tolfalas (Day 4)

The company returning from Maeglin's funeral will have new cause to mourn upon their arrival in Lond Ernil. Perion will have sent a messenger to intercept them at sea, informing them of the tragedy. Upon inspection of the still unconscious Adrazôr, both Aradan and Tirazôr will recognize to their horror the signs of Maeglin's bane. But a failure to perceive the dual nature of Adrazôr's affliction will obstruct the identification of Ioreth's role as poisoner. A close investigation of the Prince by a character with a good knowledge of exotic drugs may identify the Ethir poison, which is extremely hard (-30) to discover and absurd (-70) to identify properly.

Harwen Talks to Giladan (Day 5: late evening)

Giladan is visited in his tower by the prostitute Harwen, who reveals to him that her customer of the previous night—a young esquire of the garrison named Borgil—had told her: "Soon we will go to war for Gondor and the King. When Aradan becomes Prince, we'll march into North Ithilien to join the King's host." Giladan thanks the woman for her information and dismisses her with some silver coins. For the moment, he disregards the tale, believing the esquire to have heard some unfounded rumor in the barracks.

Aradan is Contacted by Elmir (Day 6: early morning)

A man arrives in Lond Ernil on horseback, claiming to be Elmir, a Verderer from Castle Amrûnaur. He approaches Aradan in his office with the following tale: While out on a patrol a few days ago, he happened upon a fallen messenger-rider of the Prince on the road to Lebennin. The man was dead—he had obviously fallen off his horse in an accident and had broken his neck. The letters in the messenger pouch carried the seal of the Prince, so Elmir decided to return them to Lond Ernil. Aradan thanks Elmir, who leaves the haven later that morning.

In the bag, Aradan finds three unaddressed parchment rolls carrying the Prince's seal. Upon breaking the seals to determine the content of the message, Aradan is shocked: the three parchments were written by Giladan's characteristic script (all are master forgeries, contrived for Iriel by Côr Aran experts in Pelargir). The first is personally addressed to Castamir, and purports to be a letter of acceptance to the King's offer to support Giladan's claim to the rule of Belfalas in exchange for alliance with Pelargir. The second parchment details the formal terms of this proposed alliance. The third gives a list of noblemen and other prominent individuals in Belfalas suspected of loyalist sentiments (including Aradan). Enraged at what seems to be a conspiracy between his brother Giladan and the King, Aradan burns these letters at once.

Salkhôr Talks to Giladan (Day 7: early morning)

Giladan is visited by Salkhôr, one of Aradan's servants, who tells the following tale:

> *"Milord, last night, when I was lighting the lamps of the house, I passed by the partially open door to Master Aradan's study. He was there with Lieutenant Halbarad. They discussed some political matters and I could not help to overhear what Master Aradan said with a voice strengthened by enthusiasm: 'Soon we will go to war to earn glory. The King has accepted my offer of an alliance. When I become Prince, we will march east.' Halbarad gave his approval. The rest of the discussion was a bit unclear, since they lowered their voices, but from what I heard it seems clear that Master Aradan will go to war with the King as soon as possible."*

Giladan is astonished by Salkhôr's news and asks some follow-up questions, to which he receives satisfactory answers. He suggests that Salkhôr perhaps should leave Lond Ernil, since the servant would hardly be safe after having revealed his master's secrets. Salkhôr agrees, accepting a heavy purse from Giladan, and departs.

Giladan Meets with Beregond (Day 7: later in the day)

Having received the same information from two seemingly unconnected sources, Giladan is convinced that Aradan is ready to sacrifice the well-being of the fief for the sake of military glory in Castamir's service. Giladan has no intentions of allowing this to happen, but realizes that he must find support from within the haven's garrison (since the knights will be loyal to Aradan) in order to thwart his brother's designs. He approaches the Warden of the castle and gains his support. Giladan also counts on Squire Melrandir's support, given the latter's dislike for Aradan.

Perion Approaches the Adventurers (Day 8)

Characters who communicate a genuine concern for his master's well-being will be approached by the Prince's Chief Servant, who will disclose to them his suspicions about the current estrangement between Giladan and Aradan. Iriel is unaware of this conversation.

> *"I come to you because I am distressed by what is going on here in the Prince's family. The Prince's sons have a quarrel with each other for some reason. Since his return from the funeral, Giladan has persistently refused to meet Aradan, claiming he is too busy. Aradan has responded by being strangely taciturn and foul-tempered. Both have rebuffed my attempts to conciliate, even though I have known them since their youth. Whenever he comes to visit, Tirazôr moves like a ghost through his father's home, refusing to comment on anything.*
>
> *"I have spoken to Giladan's and Aradan's servants and they say that their masters are severely upset by something. Both have received visitors in secrecy, and Aradan has burned parchments in his office. Something strange seems to affect them, and if his grace should pass away and the brothers turn enemies, ill times may come upon Belfalas.*
>
> *"Hence, I come to you for help. I cannot investigate this matter, since I must tend to my ill master, but your are related to him by blood and thus his pain is partially yours. Please, try to find out what is afoot and why the three brothers refuse to talk to one another."*

Other servants of Aradan and Giladan have also noted the growing hostility between the brothers, but are oblivious to its cause. They are able to inform characters concerning Elmir and Harwen's visits, but some of Giladan's servants (secretly in the pay of Galbar) will be evasive when interviewed for fear of discovery—a suitable red herring to sidetrack investigating characters.

TALKING TO HARWEN

Money and coercion are the only ways of obtaining further information from Harwen, who will be otherwise unwilling to discuss the matter of Giladan for fear of Iriel. Attempts at coercion must overcome Harwen's drug-induced dependency upon Iriel, while promise of money will earn them only what she told Giladan, unless she is offered enough money for her to escape Lond Ernil, in which case she may well reveal to them that Iriel forced her to tell the story by threatening to cut off her drug supply. Harwen, though, is ignorant of Iriel's motives, and knows nothing of her true intentions. If the characters fail to make her talk, Harwen will promptly tell them to get lost.

TRACKING ELMIR

Elmir had to present himself and his mission to gate guards on two occasions: (1) when he entered the Prince's Castle, and (2) at Aradan's tower. At least one of the men-at-arms on duty at that time remembers him as Elmir the Verderer with a message to Aradan, but found nothing strange in that. After all, there are many messengers coming and going from the castle. Aradan's servants remember Elmir's visit mostly because Aradan burned several pieces of parchment in his study a short time after Elmir's departure. They gather that Elmir was a messenger, but know nothing more.

TRACKING SALKHÔR

Salkhôr is well-known among the inhabitants of the castle, since he has been in Aradan's service for some years. Nobody bothers remembering his comings and goings, since he had many duties. Hence, not even Perion took note of his visit to Giladan. Salkhôr's sudden disappearance is widely discussed among the castle's servants. Nobody knows why he departed the haven without a message, but there are several more or less fanciful theories.

Salkhôr's trail leads east towards Pelargir, but will already be several days old by the time the characters are able to trace it (though he may have had some accident on the road and be stuck in Linhir or some other town on the way). Should characters actually find Salkhôr, they may bribe or coerce him into talking. He will not reveal how Iriel made him obey her, but will instead hint at being bribed by her.

IRIEL SLAYS PERION (DAY 8: AFTER SUNSET)

Iriel becomes aware that Perion is growing suspicious about Adrazôr's worsening condition, and resolves to silence the Chief Servant. She shifts into panther-form, and enters the castle by way of an ivy-covered section of the wall. Iriel finds Perion walking alone with a lantern across the Inner Bailey towards the keep, and slays him noiselessly with one paw across the throat, disappearing as swiftly as she came.

The murder is discovered within moments, but the ground is too hard to track the killer. The guards give second thought to the whispered rumors among the folk of the haven concerning a monstrous cat prowling by night, which until then had been dismissed as folly or attributed to too much wine. The story of Perion's murder quickly spreads throughout the haven the next day, growing more fantastic with successive tellings. Folk are frightened and remain indoors after dark, while the garrison wastes its time following up reported (false) sightings of the cat.

ADRAZÔR'S DEATH AND GILADAN'S COUP (DAY 13: MORNING)

The castle servants inform Giladan of his father's death—he died in his sleep that morning—but Giladan commands the servants to speak of this to no one until he has shared the ill-news with his brothers. Giladan immediately confers with Beregond, who assembles men-at-arms to arrest Aradan on charges of conspiring to muster the knights for war without the Prince's consent.

Giladan announces his father's death and Aradan's arrest to the people of Lond Ernil, claiming the Stewardship of Belfalas until he is confirmed as Adrazôr's successor. The people of the haven are overcome with both sorrow and distress at these tidings, and there is much debate among the knights and the men of the garrison concerning Giladan's claim.

Most are of the opinion that Giladan has acted rightly, given Adrazôr's naming him as Chamberlain, but dissenting voices will keep their swords in check for the moment. Halbarad is astonished at Aradan's arrest. He is convinced of his Captain's innocence; however, since he is a loyal officer, he gainsays Giladan's action only in private, expecting Aradan's name to be cleared in a court of law.

Iriel Slays Giladan (Day 13: midnight)

Iriel climbs the ivy-covered wall of Giladan's tower in panther-form, entering through the window of his sleeping quarters and silently ends his life. The Steward's death is not discovered until the following morning. A thorough investigation of Giladan's body reveals that it has been clawed and bitten by a large feline. There are no signs of resistance.

An inspection of the room reveals that the murderer must have entered through the window. Giladan had locked his door from the inside and there is no sign of opening. The soldiers who guarded his tower during the night saw nothing suspicious. The ground around the house is so hard that it is not possible to find any tracks of the murderer. Even if the characters employ magical methods, they will loose the track, since Iriel knows how to avoid detection.

Iriel Persuades Tirazôr to Claim the Succession (Day 14: 6:30 a.m.)

While Tirazôr is having breakfast with Iriel, Beregond sends word to him of his brother's death, summoning him to an emergency meeting later that morning with himself, Squire Melrandir, and Lieutenant Halbarad. During the hours before the meeting, Iriel persuades Tirazôr to take mastery of the haven. Iriel also mentions to Tirazôr the conflict between Beregond and Aradan, without referring to any details.

Tirazôr Makes his Claim (Day 14: 8:30-9:00 a.m.)

In the Meeting Hall of Tirith Aear, Tirazôr persistently claims that, due to Giladan's death and the accusations against Aradan, he alone is fit to succeed his father as Prince. Tirazôr's claim is opposed by Halbarad, who stubbornly defends Aradan's innocence. The Lieutenant's low rank and political inexperience, however, leaves him little heeded by the Warden, who gives Tirazôr his support. Melrandir is less certain about the wisdom in so hasty a decision, but eventually throws in his support because of the critical nature of their situation.

The meeting concludes at nine o'clock. A brief proclamation is composed by Tirazôr, and Beregond summons the castle heralds to make it public. The declaration is that Tirazôr now has claimed the succession, due to the critical situation following Aradan's arrest and Giladan's death. Tirazôr promises to continue his father's policies and the populace is asked to proceed with their businesses as usual. At this time, the characters are informed of Giladan's murder and Tirazôr's proclamation, either by a servant in the keep or by the heralds' voices.

The commoners will not appreciate a well-known eccentric as Prince, but since Giladan is dead and Aradan is accused of treason there is no real alternative to Tirazôr. After the meeting, the Warden privately informs Tirazôr of the reasons for Aradan's arrest. Tirazôr, ignorant of Iriel's conspiracies, accepts the story as the truth. Actually, he is happy about it, since he now will get revenge at his despised elder brother.

Iriel Blackmails Tirazôr (Day 14: 1:30-2:30 p.m.)

Iriel controls Tirazôr's house-keeper Dior (see Section 5.7.3) through his drug addiction, and will use him to deliver some scandalous documents to Lieutenant Halbarad which, she hopes, will provoke the knights of Edhelion to revolt against Tirazôr's claim.

Two of the documents are intricate Adûnaic descriptions of demon-summoning rituals. They are written in Tirazôr's hand, which is easily identified by comparing them to letters in the castle archive. The texts have attached notes describing Tirazôr's failure with these rituals, but the documents themselves are genuine, and bear witness against Tirazôr as a practitioner of Evil Arts. The third document is a well-crafted forgery, purporting to be a letter from Beregond to Tirazôr, in which the Warden accepts Tirazôr's suggestion that they should mutually support each other in politics for personal gain.

Iriel lets herself into Tirazôr's house at 1:30 p.m., and spends a few minutes gathering the parchments. She entrusts the documents to Dior and instructs him to bear them to Halbarad. Dior arrives at the Lieutenant's office at 2:00 p.m., and delivers the documents to Halbarad, claiming to have found them in Tirazôr's study (He felt that the authorities should have a look at them, given their nature.). Dior then returns to the House of the Shining Mist, where he is slain by Iriel in panther shape (see Section 5.7.3).

Meanwhile, Halbarad reads the three documents, and is shocked at what they tell. Halbarad concludes that Tirazôr and Beregond have conspired to take control of Belfalas. The Lieutenant decides that Aradan must be liberated and Tirazôr and Beregond removed. He summons the leading knights in Lond Ernil to discuss what is to be done.

The Knights Convene (Day 14: 4:00-5:00 p.m.)

Ten veteran knights convene in Halbarad's home to hear his story. They find the situation unacceptable, and decide to instigate a military coup to depose Tirazôr. After discussing the details of their plan for the coming night, each leaves to gather his men and make necessary preparations before sunset.

THE REVOLT BEGINS (DAY 14: FROM 8:00 P.M. TILL DAWN)

The knights' strategy is one of surprise and boldness, since they are badly outnumbered by the men-at-arms and yeomen of the garrison. Their four main goals are to liberate Aradan, to capture and/or kill both Tirazôr and Beregond, and to neutralize the soldiers of the garrison. The knights wish to avoid bloodshed, preferring to disarm or immobilize rather than kill their fellow soldiers. Most will be forcibly contained within their barracks until the knights have complete control of the situation. When the revolt begins, Halbarad sends one of the youngest esquires, Findegil, to the characters' rooms to recruit their assistance.

IRIEL'S ESCAPE (DAY 14: NIGHT)

During the confusion of Halbarad's insurrection—before thinking about her own safety—Iriel kills Ioreth in panther-form. Iriel would prefer that Tirazôr die in the fighting but, if he does not, Iriel will have to take that responsibility herself. It will no longer, however, be safe for her to remain in Lond Ernil.

When Tirazôr realizes that he has a serious revolt on his hands, he will give orders to his supporters to prepare his private vessel, The Aegrumor, for a quick escape. He will send Iriel to the secret harbor of Tirith Aear, where his boat lies in readiness (see Section 5.2.4). If he does not return or send word by dawn, the captain has orders to bear Iriel away to safety.

Disobeying Tirazôr's command, Iriel will follow him secretly back up to the castle in panther-form, in order to ensure that he is not captured alive. She will not kill Tirazôr unless there is no other alternative, but she will also not overly risk her own safety during the night. If it becomes plain that Tirazôr will lose the fight, Iriel will resume human shape and plead with him to flee with her. If Tirazôr actually wins the battle, Iriel will remain with him at Lond Ernil until she can find an opportunity to eliminate him.

If Tirazôr's foes give chase to The Aegrumor, Iriel will bid Tevildo to summon an allied spirit of the waters to raise up a sudden storm against their pursuers. This storm will also take control of The Aegrumor, and bear it off course, towards the Ethir. No word will come to Belfalas of its fate for at least ten days (see Section 5.8.1).

5.8 ADVENTURE: HUNTING IRIEL

The assassin of Prince Adrazôr and his family has escaped capture at Lond Ernil, and has fled in The Aegrumor, seeking sanctuary in the Ethir. There the designs of the King stop, while those of Benish Armon begin. Neithan's time has come, and Iriel's cult must hide all trace of his (and her own) whereabouts. Assuming Iriel's hand in the events in Belfalas have been uncovered, the chase may not yet be over.

5.8.1 A TALE OF PURSUIT AND COVERUP

Following the completion of her mission in Belfalas, Iriel will escape Lond Ernil (with or without Tirazôr) on the Aegrumor and flee to the safety of the Ethir. There, Colfen will arrange for the Ethir-outlaws to ambush her vessel and kill all the crew. He will act through one of their own number, a loyal agent. (Tirazôr would be spared for sacrifice at Benish Armon.) News of the missing ship will soon reach Neithan at Tarannon's manor. Tarannon will then join with Colfen to lead a search party.

At this point, Colfen will break with the Usurper's designs. He will assist Neithan in annihilating the outlaws supposedly responsible for the attack on The Aegrumor. Neither Iriel nor Tirazôr will be found, but Tevildo's minions will leave a mysterious trail of death and destruction for Neithan to follow—a trail that leads to Benish Armon. Colfen will kill off his compatriots along the way, until only he and Neithan are left. Then, he will reveal himself as the architect of this conspiracy. He will bring the dumbfounded Neithan before the Cat of Benish Armon, who will disclose to him his origin and destiny as Queen Berúthiel's descendant. Tevildo will offer to aid him in the fulfillment of his desires if Neithan will in turn agree to free the Cat from his bondage.

Neithan will not believe the Cat's words, but will nevertheless voice before Tevildo his desire to avenge himself on his betrayers at Osgiliath. The Prince of Cats will readily agree to help him, since an inscription revealing the fate of Tarannon Falastur's child can be found in the ruins of the King's house at Osgiliath (see Section 6.2.2). The Cat knows that the inscription's existence was hidden from Gondor. He also realizes that the King's Steward, then the Lord of Morthond, had agreed to foster the child as his own.

Iriel will give the Kuilëondo to Neithan, which will grant him cat-like abilities to aid him in accomplishing his revenge. Neithan will sail upriver to Osgiliath in the company of Colfen and some of the Ethir cultists. They arrive just days before the memorial of the massacre (see Section 6.8). There, Neithan prepares to steal into the Dome of Stars to recover the sword which he used to kill Ornendil. Now its blade will be turned upon others.

5.8.2 THE NPCS

CAPTAIN RASTARIN (1406-1478)

Rastarin is captain of The Calm Before the Storm, now a vessel in the employ of the Ethir-captain. Rastarin joined Neithan's River-guard to exact revenge upon Lannaigh, the leader of the Ethir-outlaws and a bitter rival of the fiery captain of the "The Calm" (as she is wont to call her ship). Rastarin's quarrel with Lannaigh goes back to her days as a young piratess among the outlaws, when the band was based far to the north in Eriador. Their rivalry for pre-eminence among the outlaws came to a head in 1435, when they first established a foothold in the Ethir and sought to reconsolidate their band after its defeat by Castamir's naval forces in Cardolan in the previous year.

At the time, Rastarin lacked the numbers to oppose Lannaigh's claims to leadership. She wisely chose to avoid a blood bath by withdrawing with her supporters to Umbar. There she found employ with Governor Telemnar, in whose service she remained until 1441, when she jumped at the chance to join forces with the newly-appointed Ethir-captain. (Remember that Neithan emphasized the eventual elimination of Lannaigh as a central reason for his hiring of her. See Section 4.6.2.)

Although many of her former comrades chide her for "going soft" in seeking a paid position in the Gondorian naval establishment, Rastarin is content with her fortunes. Aside from her bloody vendetta against Lannaigh, Rastarin finds Neithan a most agreeable superior officer, for he is free of the typical haughty Dúnadan attitude toward "lesser races" (as well as former pirates). Although their life-experiences are worlds apart, she also identifies with Neithan's feelings as an outcast.

Rastarin was in Pelargir at the time when word came to Neithan of The Aegrumor's wreck. Thus, she was not present for his "abduction" by Colfen, who told her that Neithan was slain in battle with the outlaws. Rastarin was crushed by this news, believing that she has lost a close friend for whom she cared deeply. She is prepared to embark on a full-scale rampage against Lannaigh. Colfen, however, commands her to instead bring news of The Aegrumor to Lond Ernil, while he sails upriver to attend to "business" in Osgiliath.

Rastarin is a hard-drinking, foul-mouthed, sword-touting, lust-for-life renegade who desires to most and best of everything. Her bright eyes and flame-red hair match her fiery temper, which she rarely takes thought to control—even in the presence of officers who rank above her. Accordingly, she finds it difficult to work with those who believe that their laurels alone will command her respect.

Rastarin rose from among the common folk of Cardolan. She retains her rustic speech and mannerisms even so far away from home.

AMRUKH (1397-1441†)

Amrukh is a Southron pirate who has recently joined the Ethir-outlaws. Both he and his vessel, The Shadow Dancer, face warrants for their arrest in both Pelargir and Umbar. He is secretly in the service of the Úlair Adûnaphel, and runs messages between her spies in Gondor and her contacts in Harondor (see Section 3.5.6). Amrukh recently received instructions to lend his assistance to the allied Cult of Benish Armon. He was instructed to support the scheme to stage Neithan's death.

Colfen ordered Amrukh to intercept The Aegrumor as it entered the Ethir, and told him slay all aboard save for his sister Iriel (and Tirazôr, if he was aboard). Later, after Neithan had been brought to Benish Armon, Amrukh was to return to the site of the wreck and construct the barrows for Neithan and his men. Soon after leaving the scene of the shipwreck, however, Amrukh was intercepted by Rastarin's ship, which was on its return from Pelargir.

Rastarin was unaware of Amrukh's involvement in the wreck of The Aegrumor. She had yet to hear of Neithan's fate from Colfen. Still, she apprehended the captain and crew of The Shadow Dancer, placing them into custody and taking them to Tarannon's manor. There she spoke with Colfen, who ordered her to alert Lond Ernil of the wreck while he sailed to Osgiliath. Colfen had no choice but to leave Amrukh jailed at the manor.

Amrukh is a swarthy, unkempt Southron rogue with several missing teeth. He speaks only broken Westron. His heavy accent and numerous unpleasant mannerisms offend most people's sensibilities. The political immunity he enjoys as a result of his association with Lannaigh's outlaws enlarges his already swollen sense of self-importance.

5.8.3 THE SETTINGS

THE SHIPWRECK

The Aegrumor is run aground on a sandbar near the edge of the Ethir, where the delta meets the sea. It is stranded some twelve miles off the coast of Lebennivet. The hull and mast are intact, but the sails have been shredded by the sudden, westerly storm that roared past Tolfalas some two weeks ago (see "Iriel's Escape," Section 5.7.5). The vessel lies nearly on its side, like a tree blown over in a great gale. Its hold is half-submerged. The ship is empty of all loose objects (either drifted away or plundered).

Near to the wreckage, on dry ground, is the site of the battle that took place between Neithan and the outlaws. A line of eight earthen barrow-mounds have been raised for the Ethir-captain and those of his men that fell in the fighting. Each barrow has a sword or other favored weapon of that individual thrust into it. Characters familiar with Neithan will recognize his blade, and may mark a small pendant hanging from the hilt that bears the crest of Morthond. A large common grave has been dug for the outlaws slain nearby.

TARANNON'S MANOR

Rond Berúthiel, Taronnon's large manor, lies in the midst of Ethir Anduin. Built upon stone arches, it is used as the headquarters for the River-guard of the Ethir-captain. Its name derives from its having been built by King Tarannon Falastur for his wife and Queen, Berúthiel. (Ironically, it has become the residence for her descendant, Neithan.) Castamir ordered it renovated when he created the office of Ethir-captain in 1438. It has been modified by the creation of a large cell for holding criminals. A recently-added wing houses the small Ethir garrison. The small, stone pier that extends from its main entrance can accommodate as many as five small patrol vessels.

5.8.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to follow the trail of The Aegrumor to the Ethir, and there to realize that Neithan is still alive and bound for Osgiliath. Although it is unlikely that the characters will understand why Neithan is so important to Iriel and Colfen's designs, they may well perceive that he is the key to explaining the murder of the Prince and his sons. Iriel does not actually take part in the action, since she will be at Benish Armon, protected from discovery by the cats and their servants (though the adventure could be turned into a raid on the cult's stronghold; see Section 2.3.3). The purpose of the adventure is to get the characters from Lond Ernil to Osgiliath in time for the Day of Memory.

STARTING THE CHARACTERS

Ideally, the player-characters should already be involved in this adventure because of prior events in Belfalas. The easiest way to get them to the Ethir is to have Rastarin bring them on her ship. She would arrive at Lond Ernil some two weeks after the revolt of the Swan-knights. While bearing news of The Aegrumor's wreck and Neithan's death, she will bring no word regarding either Tirazôr or Iriel. She has been instructed by Colfen to assist the Prince (or whoever is in power in Belfalas at this point) with the recovery of the vessel and any further investigation of Tirazôr/Iriel's fate. The voyage from Lond Ernil to the site of the wreck in the Ethir will take four days.

AIDS

There are no traces of Iriel's whereabouts at the wreck of The Aegrumor. It is unlikely that the characters will pursue the right leads unless they know or suspect that the story Colfen told Rastarin about the battle with the Ethir-outlaws was actually a lie. By interrogating Amrukh they may discover precious information, but only if they know which questions to ask. Rastarin's ship and her knowledge of the Ethir will be the characters' most important asset for getting where they need to go to learn the truth.

While preparing the graves of Neithan and his men, Amrukh found that they were short one weapon. The Southron captain drew forth his own dagger from its sheath, and stuck it into one of the mounds. This is the clue that may lead Rastarin to make the connection that Amrukh was present at the site of The Aegrumor. After all, she might recognize the weapon as his, especially since Rastarin noticed his empty sheath when she captured he and his crew.

OBSTACLES

The biggest obstacle to catching up with their prey is that Iriel is no longer the focus of the action. There are no clues that hint at where to go from the site of the wreck (save for Amrukh's dagger). Also, there is the conceptual difficulty in not knowing what motive Colfen would have in concealing the truth about the battle with the outlaws. The only possible means of discovering the truth would be to follow him to Osgiliath (or wait for him to return).

OUTCOMES

Should the adventurers interrogate Amrukh and uncover Colfen's deception, they will have to decide whether to pursue the matter further, or to continue searching the Ethir for Iriel. Colfen will not return from Osgiliath for another two weeks (after the Day of Memory), so they may choose to immediately pursue him for further questioning (this will be Rastarin's desire). On the other hand, if the characters fall prey to Amrukh's conniving, they may end up on their way to a deadly confrontation with Lannaigh at Fanuilond. (This has nothing to do with the plot of the adventure, but could serve as a diversion for the players.)

5.8.5 ENCOUNTERS

SEARCHING THE SITE OF THE WRECK (DAY 4)

A thorough search of the area will turn up no obvious clues to what actually happened. Perceptive characters may take notice of the rather distinctive quality of the dagger placed on one of the burial mounds. This, if pointed out to Rastarin, may lead her to suspect that Amrukh himself was somehow involved. If the characters decide to excavate Neithan's grave, they will find rather the mutilated body of Tirazôr.

INTERROGATING AMRUKH (DAY 5)

Amrukh is currently being held prisoner at Tarannon's manor. He may be questioned on Rastarin's authority. At first, Amrukh will claim ignorance of the wreck of The Aegrumor or of the massacre of its crew. Only if confronted with plausible evidence of his presence (backed up with significant bodily threat) will he talk. Even then, he will try not to disclose any element of the conspiracy, a plot which the characters have yet to discern.

If the wily Southron realizes that they don't yet know about Tirazôr's body, he may well lead them off on a useless chase. If nothing else, the folly will get him out of jail. He will suggest that Lannaigh holds Tirazôr for ransom at Fanuilond. Afterwards, Amrukh will offer to lead the adventurers there in exchange for his freedom. (He will, of course, try to betray them.) If Colfen or Iriel discover that Amrukh has talked, they ask the cult to hunt him down.

6.0 OSGILIATH

Prior to its burning by Castamir in T.A. 1437, Osgiliath was the chief city of Gondor and the royal seat of its Kings. Within its walls, encompassing both banks of the Anduin, was succored the largest urban population in the realm (easily doubling that of Minas Anor at its height). Inside its fortress, the Citadel of Stars, was housed the Master-palantír of the South-kingdom, by which alone the King could communicate with his kinsmen in Arnor. Now, all of this is destroyed and gone.

Osgiliath's fate during the Kin-strife reflects Castamir's true nature. After the burning of 1437, Osgiliath became a city of ghosts, a grim harbinger of days to come. Although he could not officially strip the city of its royal status, the Usurper did everything in his power to make Osgiliath unfit to be the royal seat. Castamir refused to repair any of the damage done by his men, and he outlawed most all economic activity within its walls. Even worse, he transformed the once great capital into an inhuman prison town. During the Usurper's reign, Osgiliath has become a guarded city, a vast jail for those branded as his enemies.

6.1 A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Unlike Gondor's other cities, Osgiliath possesses no rural hinterland of its own. Its walls straddle the boundaries of the wards of Minas Anor and Minas Ithil in the midst of the Anduin vale. The two halves of the city rise gently from the eastern and western banks of the Great River. Here, at its narrowest point, the Anduin ranges between twenty-nine and thirty-six hundred feet in width. Four large bridges (one of them ruined) span the breadth of the river. They reach the city by way of a small islet near to the eastern bank.

Although Osgiliath accommodates a moderately deep harbor, the Anduin is generally quite shallow as it passes through the city. Its depth ranges from between fifteen to thirty-five feet. Most times, especially when the river is low, vessels possessed of a deep draft simply weigh anchor in Pelargir.

6.2 THE CITY LAYOUT

Osgiliath is in truth two cities, each of which sprawls out along its own bank of the river. Both halves of the city cluster around the gates of the Great Bridge and, in each quarter, all the city's streets extend outward from this focal point. While not designed to withstand a siege, Osgiliath was founded to defend the Anduin crossings. Consequently, a great deal of strategic thought was given to the Great Bridge and its fortifications.

Osgiliath retains this strategic importance during the Usurper's reign because the King's greatest threat remains in the north. Two great walls erected or fortified by Castamir now starkly define the boundaries of settlement. No buildings have been constructed beyond these walls for many hundreds of yards.

Osgiliath is organized into "heptonards." Three of these seven divisions occupy each bank of the Anduin, while the river, its islands, and the bridges comprise the seventh. After 1437, these administrative divisions have little import, for the great burning and slaughter suffered at the hands of the confederates erased most of the meaningful administrative distinctions—geographic, demographic, or otherwise. Nonetheless, the current masters of Osgiliath find it convenient and effective to refer to the old names as a way of delineating their respective spheres of control.

6.2.1 THE BRIDGES

There are actually four major bridges which join the two halves of Osgiliath. The most important of these is the Great Bridge, Isildur and Anarion's original foundation, which intersects the Citadel of Stars in the midst of the river. The three other lesser bridges span the Anduin north of the Great Bridge. Since the closing of the city in 1437, one of these lies ruined, and the other two have been sealed off and guarded. The Great Bridge had once housed the eleven most powerful noble families in the city, but they have been commanded to abandon their residences.

6.2.2 THE CITADEL OF STARS

THE DOME OF STARS

1. The Courtyard. This enclosed space joins the two arms of the Great Bridge by way of fortified gates to the east and west. Another gate on its northern side connects this central courtyard to the Citadel and King's House. This was the site of the massacre of 1437, and is the gathering place for the annual memorial ceremonies (see Section 6.8).

2. The Great Hall. This partially ruined hall was once the Throne-room of the South-kingdom, where Isildur and Anarion sat side-by-side. The empty throne still stands, but the Steward does not use this hall for official functions. Above the royal seat hangs the sword by which Ornendil was slain—a symbol of Calimon's dominion over the guarded city.

3. The Ruins of the Tower. The partially collapsed Tower of the Dome, which once held the Master-stone, is now a mound of rubble, strewn about the Great Hall and tumbled into the waters of the Anduin. A constant guard is set here, since the rubble makes an easy entry into the Dome of Stars.

4. Royal Archive and Hallows. These were built beneath the floor of the Great Hall, and were completely buried by the collapse of the Tower in 1437. Many of the royal tombs and ancient documents were destroyed or irrevocably damaged in the calamity, and there has since been an extensive effort to restore, recover, and remove what is salvageable (see "Parmandil," Section 6.62).

THE CITADEL

1. The Garrison. This complex houses the main garrison of Osgiliath under the command of Captain Mardil. It includes a dungeon with facilities for use by Angbor's Côr Aran.

2. The Steward's Quarters. Originally the quarters for the commander of the Citadel garrison, this three story apartment now serves as Calimon's combined official and private residence. It also contains lodging and office space for Angbor.

3. The Quays. These royal military docks harbor Mardil's small fleet of river patrol craft. The quays extend along both sides of the Citadel.

THE KING'S HOUSE

1. The Courtyard. This inner courtyard gives access to all parts of the King's House, and is linked to one of the lesser bridges spanning the river (now closed off).

2. The Feasting Hall. Although smaller than the Great Hall, this structure is used for all public events involving the King or one of his visiting representatives (generally, a very infrequent occasion).

3. The King's Quarters. This royal residence includes guest quarters for important guests and for the maintenance staff, who keep the place in order during the King's absence.

4. The Gardens. These terraced pleasure gardens have remained untended since the breaking of the siege in 1437, and are correspondingly wild and overgrown. There is a hidden inscription on a moss-covered stone in these gardens which makes reference to the fate of King Tarannon's child (see Sections 2.3.3, 5.8.1, 6.8.2). The iron gates to the gardens are padlocked.

6.2.3 TOL GILTHONIEL

Tol Gilthoniel is a narrow islet situated near to the eastern bank of the river. Named after the Vala Elbereth, it is joined to Osgiliath by numerous bridges that transverse its length. The isle is uninhabited, but it contains an ill-tended park and a monumental pillar raised by King Ostoher. Most of the passages to Tol Gilthoniel have been sealed off during the Usurper's reign.

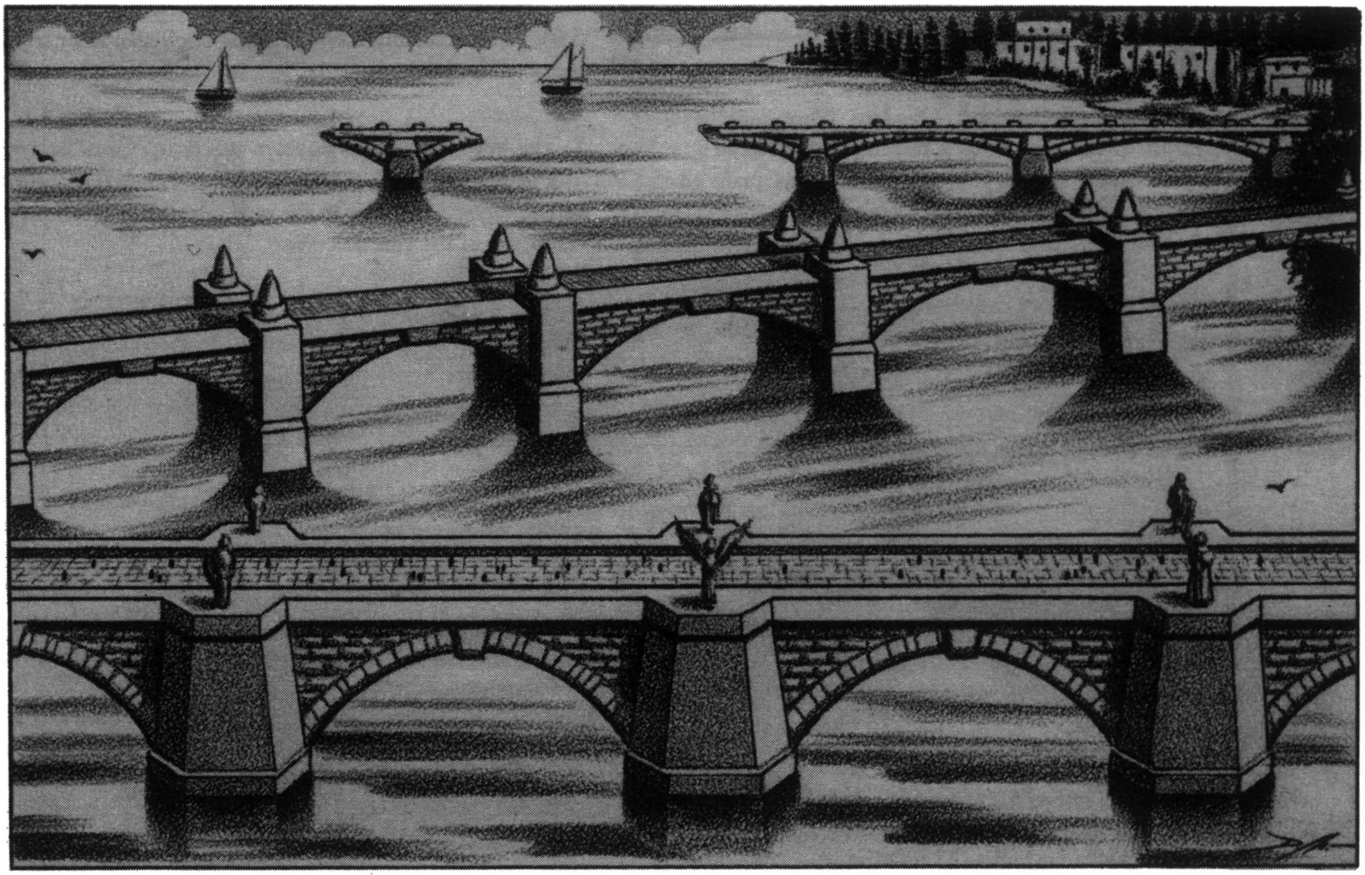
6.2.4 EAST OSGILIATH

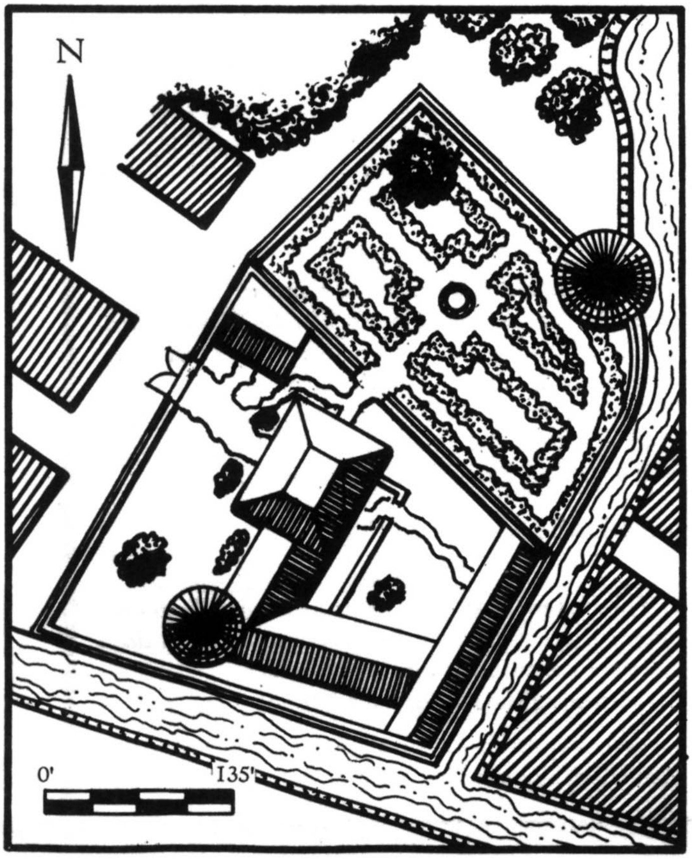
WILWARIN

1. The Eastern Fort. This structure adjoins the northeastern corner of the city walls, and houses a large garrison under the command of Lieutenant Arador.

2. Celebrin's Flat. See Section 6.7.2.

Bridges of Osgiliath





The Healers' Hall

Menelvagor

1. The Royal Garrison. This large compound lies in the midst of the eastern city and once housed the standing army of the Kings. It now serves as the main garrison quarters for Lieutenant Derufin's men.

2. The East-gate. The eastern span of the Great Bridge is sealed off from the city by this strongly fortified gatehouse, which functions as a subsidiary base for the Menelvagor garrison.

Helluin

1. Hyarrost. This fort was part of the original Second Age defenses during the war of the Last Alliance, when East Osgiliath was besieged by the Enemy. It has never been fully repaired, but serves as the quarters for Lieutenant Aegnor's garrison.

2. The Vole Hole. See Section 6.6.2.

3. The Ethir Enclave. This riverside district is home to the guarded city's Ethir population. Its inhabitants are unfriendly to outsiders (see Section 6.4.2).

6.2.5 WEST OSGILIATH

Belthil

1. The Western Fort. This ancient fortification was the site of the original river ferry that predated the building of the Great Bridge in S.A. 3320. Now it is used as the central headquarters for the Belthil garrison under the leadership of Lieutenant Cirion.

2. The Common Hallows. This expanse of open land has served as the cemetery for Osgiliath's commoners. With the violation of many tombs in the wake of the Kin-strife, some families have sought permission to remove their dead and lay them to rest elsewhere, so the grounds are punctuated with many empty graves.

3. The Healers' Hall. Originally the villa of House Telumendil, this three story complex is now used by the Healers (see Section 6.4.3). It contains two adjoining infirmaries, quarters for the healers, and a tower overlooking a branch of the Median Canal. The building is surrounded by a wall which also encloses a small herb garden.

Thoronumen

1. Rozin's Keep. Once the residence of House Rozin, this fortified tower serves as a major site of grain storage for the western city. It is under Lieutenant Gelmir's authority (see Section 6.3.2).

2. The King's Fountains. These still functioning fountains constitute the principal source of fresh water for West Osgiliath.

3. Cirator's Forge. Located in the ruins of the old smithies' district of West Osgiliath, this forge is hidden in the stone basement of a collapsed stone building. An adjoining cellar contains Cirator's forging materials, which are periodically replenished from the outside (see Section 6.6). This is the only active forge in Osgiliath, apart from those of the garrison.

Lumbar

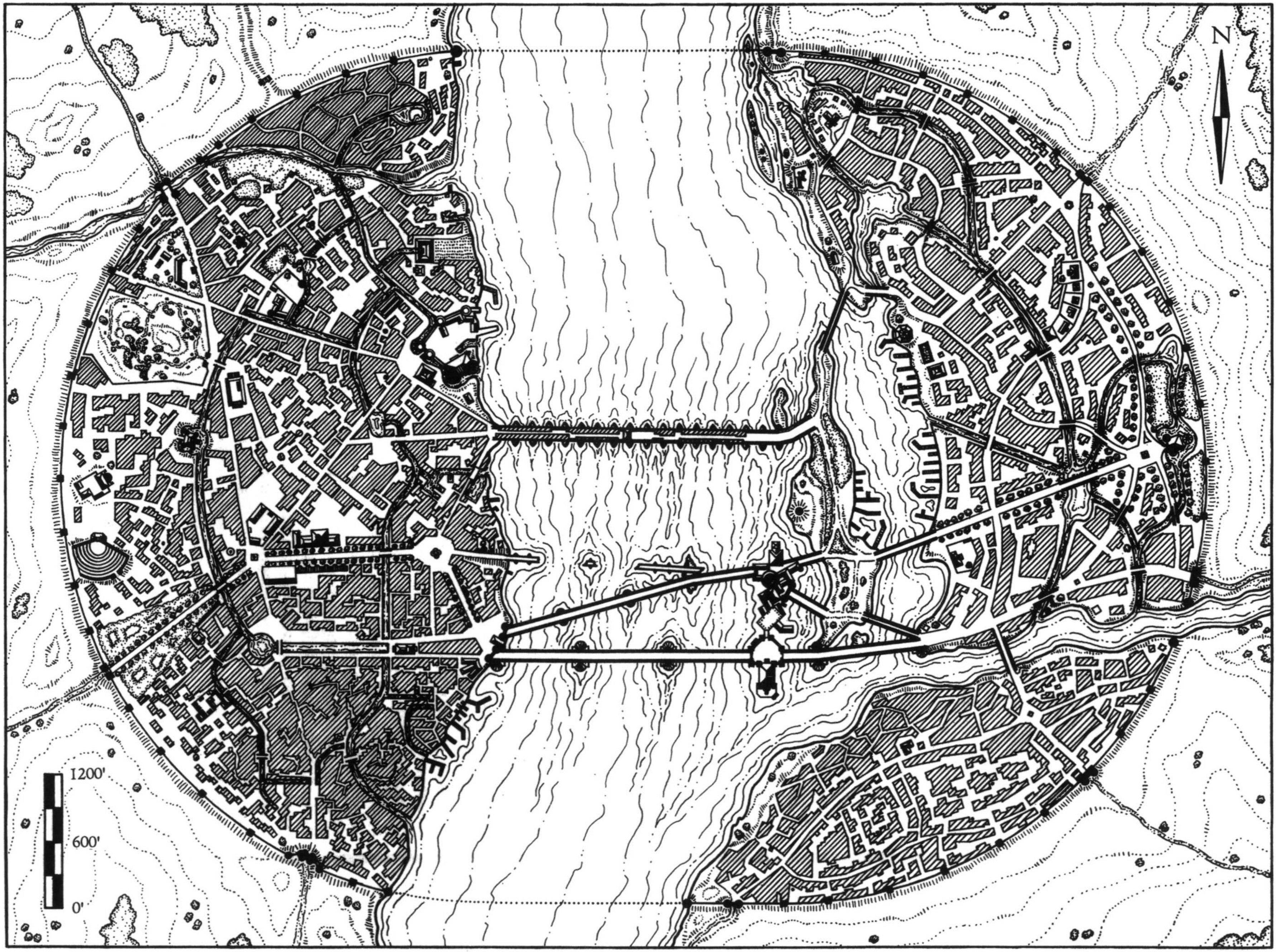
1. The West-gate. This garrison guards the Great Bridge.

2. The River's Edge. Situated along the quays just south of the West-gate, this is the sole operative tavern and resthouse in the guarded city.

6.3 THE CITY AUTHORITIES

As the royal seat of the South-kingdom, Osgiliath is ruled by a Steward in the King's absence. During the Usurper's reign, however, this office is actually akin to a wardenship. Having become a haven for Castamir's relocated enemies, Osgiliath is as much a prison as it is a city. Serving as a very large jail, its administration is oriented toward control and confinement. The Steward oversees the fallen capital using a rigid martial code, while the principal duty of the Steward's garrison is to keep the inhabitants of Osgiliath inside the city walls. As its name suggests, the guarded city is in effect an occupied territory administered directly by military officers.

Aside from containment, the military authorities of Osgiliath are responsible for the distribution of grain to the people, the regulation of traffic passing through the city, and the suppression of large-scale violence among and between imprisoned groups. Grain is usually brought into Osgiliath from Anórien or Harondor, for the wheat of Ithilien is considered too valuable to "waste" on the guarded city. This entails an extensive river transport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system. Entrance to and exit from the city walls requires a permit signed either by Calimon or one of his lieutenants. Little effort is expended to quell ethnic violence unless this threatens the external security of the city walls.

The Garrison

Osgiliath's garrison is posted in the wall-forts at the city's perimeter. Its headquarters is the Citadel of Stars, which houses eight hundred heavy infantry under Calimon's chief officer. Each of the encircling wall-forts are manned by infantry divisions. Two hundred strong, they function under the authority of a lieutenant.

The soldiers that make up Osgiliath's garrison are of diverse origin. Still, each of the sub-divisions (with the exception of the Citadel Guard) are mustered from the same province or territory of the realm. This ensures cohesion.

Officer	Jurisdiction	Fortress
Captain Mardil	Formenel	The Citadel of Stars
Lieutenant Cirion	Belthil	The Western Fort
Lieutenant Gelmir	Thoronúmen	Rozil's Keep
Lieutenant Damrod	Lumbar	The West-gate
Lieutenant Aegnor	Helluin	Hyarrost
Lieutenant Derufin	Menelvagor	The East-gate
Lieutenant Arador	Wilwarin	The Eastern Fort

6.4 THE INHABITANTS

Because its inhabitants are denied access to most any productive economic activity, the local population is disproportionately small when compared to the physical size of their guarded city. The people of Osgiliath must eat, and the city's upward population limit is therefore restricted to the amount of grain Castamir sanctions for its food supply. This, in turn, is circumscribed by the relative importance of maintaining the guarded city in the face a pressing need for distribution of royal resources elsewhere in the realm.

Despite this upper limit to the satisfaction of its subsistence needs, Osgiliath's population is constantly fluctuating. This is due, on the one hand, to a high mortality rate—both "natural" and violent—and, on the other hand, to the periodic influx of new deportees. Although the city authorities have no means of keeping track of exact numbers, Calimon strives to keep the population level just above what is sustainable. This means that there is a chronic food shortage in the guarded city, which inevitably leads to violent conflict between groups struggling to survive. This policy works, in effect, to compel Castamir's enemies to destroy one another.

6.4.1 IMPRISONED GROUPS

The imprisoned members of forcibly relocated groups make up the majority of Osgiliath's inhabitants. Folk of common ethnic or geographic origin tend to gravitate towards one another, seeking mutual support in preexisting societal bonds for security and protection. Each of these sub-sections of the populace exerts control over a tacitly recognized portion of the city. These spheres of control do not always correspond to the old heptonard divisions on which Osgiliath was founded.

Group Origin	Numbers	Sphere of Control
Calenardhon	3,000	Wilwarin
Ithilien	1,000	Lumbar
Anórien	1,000	Menelvagor
Lossarnach	2,000	Thoronúmen, Lumbar
Anfalas	400	Menelvagor

6.4.2 THE ETHIR ENCLAVE

A sizable community of laborers from the Ethir has arisen in the former jurisdiction of Helluin in East Osgiliath. These folk are not prisoners of the guarded city, but work in the fortification and restoration projects of the authorities. Many of them are under the power of Benish Armon (see Section 2.3.3), though no rituals are undertaken in the city without the permission of Iriel or Colfen. Still, the prison population of Osgiliath shuns the enclave, being distrustful of anyone who would willingly dwell in the city of their oppression.

6.4.3 THE HEALERS

Some forty healers have been allowed to remain within the guarded city since its closing. As their original facilities had been torched in the burning of 1437, a new hall was provided for them by a wealthy and benevolent merchant family, House Telumendil. This hall is under the authority of Terieth, daughter of Malbeth (the head of the Healers in Minas Anor). Arms are not allowed inside the hall, a stricture which Calimon's men often violate.

6.4.4 NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

Steward Calimon

Calimon is a laughably bad choice for an administrator, much less Steward of the royal seat. Morlaen's impetuous son absents himself from the greater part of his duties, delegating tiresome matters to Mardil or one of his lieutenants, and spends his days in the decaying luxury of the King's House thinking up things to do with his free time. He is aware that mockery was the intent behind his appointment to Osgiliath, and does his best to live up to his royal cousin's expectations, relishing in the challenge of constructing a reign of terror in the guarded city. Calimon enjoys his current position for he is subject to no one himself. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

Angbor (1377-1447†)

Angbor is the Côr Aran's chief representative in Osgiliath. He received his position from Caramir at Calimon's petition in reward for his betrayal of Orodreth during the siege of Osgiliath. Caramir has high hopes for him, and when Osgiliath is abandoned (as Castamir purposes) he plans to have Angbor assume leadership of the Minas Anor branch. Angbor's struggle to remain alive during the Kin-strife has given him the skills necessary for a Côr Aran leader, and his intelligence network is very tight.

Angbor is a grim man with few friends. He is cautious in his dealings with Calimon, but privately thinks himself superior to the city authorities, and rarely takes their viewpoints seriously. Although committed to his post, Angbor desires to be rid of Osgiliath and is always thinking up ways of hastening the removal of its royal status.

Cealen (1412-1447†)

Cealen is the leader of a band from Lossarnach that supported Eldacar but refused to abandon the city during the siege. When Osgiliath was turned over to Calimon, Cealen was captured and sent away to the prison-mines of Anfalas. Meanwhile, his kinsmen went underground. In Anfalas, Cealen joined forces with two fellow prisoners—Celebrin and Telcontar (see Section 6.7.2)—and escaped to return to his comrades in Osgiliath.

Through Mórdulin, Cealen has been able to establish contact with his brethren, who still fight on in the mountains. He hopes to find a way to aid them in their struggle. Cealen is torn, however, by fear for the fate of his people who dwell in Osgiliath, and for the many more whom Castamir has newly "resettled" in the city. He regards Eldacar's abandonment of Osgiliath as a betrayal of their trust, and now has little sympathy for the exiled King or his "loyalists." While Cealen may ally himself with them against Calimon, he is wary of their motives and will not sacrifice his people for their King.

Cealen is young to be a leader of so many men. His years in prison, though, have matured his character to assume the visage of command. Despite his bitterness for both Eldacar and the Usurper, Cealen is a friendly and outgoing person. He is generally more optimistic about his people's future than his demeanor would at first suggest.

Brenith (1409-1487)

Brenith is keeper of The River's Edge (see Section 6.2.8). His family is from Lossarnach, though he himself was born in Osgiliath. He inherited the tavern from his father and has continued to run it with his family since the siege. The River's Edge was one of the few taverns left undamaged by the rebels, and remains in business primarily due to Cirator's protection. The tavern-keeper knows many people in the guarded city, and is a valuable source of information.

Brenith has some Dúnadan blood in him, which makes his appearance less distinctively "Daen." He is proud of his heritage, however, and prominently flouts a thick Lossarnach accent inherited from his father.

Lady Terieth (1386-1563)

Terieth is mistress of the Healers Hall of Osgiliath and daughter to Malbeth of Minas Anor (see Section 7.4.4). She had been acquainted with Mórdulin before the Kin-strife through Mórdulin's cousin Lórin, who was Warden of the Stone of Minas Anor. Following the burning in T.A. 1437, the surviving members of House Telumendil granted Terieth use of their former villa in Osgiliath for the healing of injuries to family members. Since that time Terieth has guided the work of the healers in the city as she might under the circumstances.

She is not afraid of Calimon and frequently denounces him in public for his lack of care for his subjects, but the Steward does not view her as a threat and so gives Terieth her due when he must. Terieth is highly regarded by the inhabitants of the city, but they realize that she is powerless to protect them against the Usurper's men. It is for this reason that Terieth is permitted to remain in Osgiliath while Mórdulin is not.

Terieth is a tall woman of pure Dúnadan descent, who carries with her the healing aura of Estë the Healer. She wears the white robes of the Healers when inside the walls of the guarded city, which keeps her from being harassed by Calimon's men.

Cirator (1392-1534)

Cirator is a man of many faces: he is a prisoner of the guarded city, a loyalist sympathizer, and a servant of Castamir on a mission of the utmost secrecy. Cirator is native to Osgiliath, but left the city after its siege to ply his trade in Pelargir. Cirator's father had been a weaponsmith for the royal garrison under Valacar, but Cirator himself doubted Eldacar's ability to hold the reins of power, and was instrumental in the final betrayal of the capital to the confederates.

Castamir recognized Cirator's services by making him armorer for the Lord's House in Pelargir. Soon after, Caramir was quick to recruit Cirator's eyes and ears as a means of keeping the Côr Aran informed of the King's closest counsels. In time, the Usurper became aware of Cirator's spying and decided to put a stop to his cousin's overzealous interest in his private affairs. But, not wanting Cirator's talents to go to waste, the King offered him a choice: death, or the privilege of accomplishing Castamir's highest purpose—the removal of royal honors from Osgiliath. Cirator chose the latter.

Cirator's mission was to foment rebellion in Osgiliath, a task which he was to undertake as a condemned prisoner. Without Caramir's knowledge, Castamir had Cirator arrested on trumped-up charges of disloyalty and had him sent to the guarded city. Within its walls, the former weaponsmith must make contact with potential rebels and organize them without any help from the Usurper or the Côr Aran.

Cirator maintains a low profile in Osgiliath, and is not easily distinguished from the rest of the inhabitants of the guarded city. In general, he dresses in garb similar to the men of Calenardhon or Lossarnach with whom he dwells. But his Dúnadan ancestry sets him apart by height and facial features. He is convincing and articulate in his loyalist mask.

6.5 CLANDESTINE GROUPS

Because the authorities rarely interact with the inhabitants of Osgiliath, there is much that goes on within the guarded city which eludes them. This does not necessarily mean, however, that groups unknown to the authorities are "secret" with respect to the majority of the people. Still, thanks to Calimon's conniving and the Côr Aran, secrecy and plotting permeates interaction among the authorities.

6.5.1 THE CÔR ARAN

It is assumed that everyone held within the walls of Osgiliath is a potential enemy of the King, so the function of the Côr Aran in the guarded city is rather different from its role in other cities. Its primary task is two-fold. On the one hand, Caramir wants Calimon and his men watched (as is standard procedure elsewhere where there are large bodies of troops far from the King's direct control); on the other hand, Angbor has been instructed to take advantage of the loyalist and proto-loyalist concentration in Osgiliath in order to seek out links between those imprisoned inside and any possible "sympathizers" remaining in contact with them from their place of origin. In this way, Caramir hopes to use the guarded city to track down and ferret out loyalists elsewhere in the realm.

6.5.2 UNDERGROUND COALITIONS

Unauthorized groups are often a necessity in Osgiliath, due to the lack of formal administrative structure. Such groups tend to form on the basis of ethnic affinity or kinship ties and are usually oriented towards the acquisition of needed goods or services. In some cases these various coalitions are recognized and tolerated by the lieutenants (e.g., for local arbitration of disputes), but often they represent a threat to the prerogatives of the city authorities, and so are officially banned.

SUPPLY NETWORKS

Smuggling goods into Osgiliath offers much danger and little profit to outsiders, but for those inside it generates respect and allegiance among one's own people. Food is the most common commodity brought in, and the river is the only possible avenue of transport if one wishes to evade Calimon's men. Boats pass north or south of the city walls along the river to secret drop-off points in Anórien and Ithilien. It is only relatively safe to attempt this during the dark of the moon or under heavy fog. Otherwise, Calimon's river patrol is likely to spot and apprehend the smugglers.

Once inside Osgiliath the illegal goods are usually brought to a local patron or strongman of the group in question, who is responsible for seeing that it reaches those in need in a peaceful fashion. Some groups like the Lossarnach rebels utilize such channels to acquire weapons and other supplies for their war on Calimon's men, while others, like the Healers, use them to obtain healing herbs and other necessities.

PATRONAGE AND PROTECTION

Because the lieutenants rarely intervene to stop outbreaks of violence within and between the native and refugee populations of the city, these ethnic groups gravitate by necessity to the strongest among them as sources of protection and of mediation in their day-to-day lives. Sometimes these have influence with Calimon's men, though more commonly they do not. To receive the benefits of such extra-legal protection is to be obligated to one's benefactor. When such ties of loyalty become too strong, the lieutenants begin to worry.

6.5.3 THE REBELS FROM LOSSARNACH

Although Minas Anor surrendered to Castamir without a fight, there were many in Anórien who remained loyal to the King and continued to oppose the rebel forces. The men of Lossarnach fought on from their mountain vales, and were never wholly subdued by the enemy. Many of their kinsmen had joined in the defense of Osgiliath and the clans of the Ered Nimrais refused to abandon them to the besiegers, whatever the outcome.

Those inside the city were of like mind when news came that Castamir's men were making war upon their brethren in the mountains, and viewed Eldacar's flight as a betrayal of their trust. They refused to leave Osgiliath even when it was taken. Because they have allies near enough to the city walls, the men of Lossarnach inside Osgiliath desire not only to protect their own, but to actively resist the rule of Calimon by violent means. Their ultimate goal is to break through the defenses of West Osgiliath and liberate their kinsmen from their imprisonment in the city, escaping together to continue the fight from Lossarnach itself.

Their principal difficulty is in the smallness of their numbers and in their inability to forge a common cause with other potentially rebellious groups in Osgiliath. Thus far Eldacar has had difficulty in making contact with loyalists in the city. Cirator alone has gathered to himself both loyalists and those desperate enough to throw in their lot with him (see Section 6.4.4). He has also made contact with Cealen, the leader of the rebels from Lossarnach, and has been attempting to coordinate their activities (see Section 6.7.2).

6.6 ADVENTURE: HEALERS AND DEALERS

Osgiliath has little to offer in the way of urban convenience. Anyone who hopes to accomplish anything within its walls must have friends with the right connections (not always pleasant ones). One must often compromise sensibilities and cherished ideals in order to survive. Osgiliath is like a spider's web: a deal made on one street corner will have repercussions everywhere.

6.6.1 A TALE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In an effort to weaken the influence of Lady Terieth among the people of Osgiliath, Calimon has severely restricted the regular supply of healing herbs and other necessaries to the Healers Hall in Belthil—so much so that Terieth would be unable to continue for long in her calling had she failed to make other arrangements. Rather than undertaking the risk of smuggling herbs overland from Minas Anor or the vales of Lossarnach, Terieth has turned to the woodlands of embattled North Ithilien. But the guarded waters of the Anduin bar her way.

With the help of Aelindur, her friend and co-conspirator in Minas Ithil's shantytown, Terieth was able to establish contact with Bregor, the leader of a North Ithilien rebel group. The frequent raids of Bregor's band upon the road between East Osgiliath and Minas Ithil often brought them close to the walls of the guarded city, and the outlaws' familiarity with the surrounding woodlands gave them intimate knowledge of where to find the herbs vital to the healers.

In return for gathering and transporting these herbs to Terieth under cover of night, the lady offered to Bregor the services of her healers (a pressing need for the rebel leader, given the constant stream of casualties resulting from repeated engagements with Heruvorn's men). This arrangement has worked to Terieth and Bregor's mutual advantage for some time now, but a recent and unlooked-for crisis could very well spell disaster for both. Captain Karan of Minas Ithil's Southron garrison has long sought to win the honor of capturing a rebel leader, and Bregor is his chief target.

The clever Southron devised a cunning ploy to lure his prey out of the safety of the woods. After securing the cooperation of a certain wool-merchant—one Saeros bound for Minas Anor via the Osgiliath road—Karan planted several false rumors among the market-places of Minas Ithil that this merchant was scheduled to transport a secret tribute collection to Osgiliath (and thence downriver to Pelargir by boat). Karan was right in guessing that the promise of gold would draw the ambitious outlaw chief into the open.

Saeros offered no resistance to Bregor when his outlaws surrounded his wagon-train that night on the road, but he was able to distract them long enough for Karan's counter-ambush to be sprung. The rout was immediate, and many of Bregor's men fell before the poisoned darts of Karan's mounted archers. The rebel leader and his surviving comrades scarcely escaped with their lives, robbing the greedy Southron of his hoped-for prize.

Nevertheless, Karan was not wholly disappointed with the outcome of the skirmish, for among the wounded rebels he found Bregor's daughter, Anharniel. The Southron captain ordered her life spared, so that she could be held for ransom and as future bait for her father. It was discovered, though, that the girl had been wounded by a poisoned arrow, and Karan swiftly realized that a dead Anharniel would be worthless to him.

In order to preserve the value of his precious hostage, Karan commanded Saeros to bring Anharniel to the safety of the Healers Hall in Osgiliath. A detachment of his soldiers was sent along to keep watch over the girl, to ensure that she not be allowed to escape his clutches. A shocked Terieth soon found her facilities forcibly occupied by Karan's brutish toughs and the wounded body of her secret ally's only daughter.

She must, of course, save Anharniel's life; but once the girl is well enough to leave, Terieth must choose whether to abandon her to Karan's men (and so lose Bregor's friendship and her vital supply of herbs) or to assist in Anharniel's escape (and thereby risk herself—and maybe the entire Healers Hall—being branded an enemy of the King). In the meantime, however, other events will transpire in the guarded city which may have a significant impact on Anharniel's fate.

The sojourning loremaster Parmandil is about to uncover the first of the royal hallows beneath the ruined Dome of Stars in the course of his restoration work. This find will attract the attention of Cirator, who will bribe the greedy Saeros and his grave-robbing friends to break out Anharniel themselves in exchange for access to the recently-discovered tomb. In effecting this chain of events, Cirator will have proved himself a loyalist to Terieth and won himself an important future contact in Saeros.

6.6.2 THE NPCS

ANHARNIEL (1422-1503)

Anharniel is the only child of the rebel leader Bregor (see Sections 8.4.4, 8.5.2, 8.6.2). Her mother was slain by Karan's men when Heruvorn ordered their South Ithilien farm confiscated for strip-mining. Seeing no alternative course of action, Bregor resolved to bring Anharniel with him into the perils of North Ithilien.

Anharniel has lived the life of an outlaw for nearly three years now, and has become as skilled in woodcraft as any of her father's company. Although scarcely a girl, the years of exile have hardened her into a fighter consumed with an overweening desire for vengeance against her mother's murderers. This passion has led to numerous brushes with death or capture, and now it seems that her worst fears have been realized.

Anharniel would rather die than allow herself to be used by the despicable Karan to endanger her father. Unfortunately, her present state of near-total helplessness hinders her from acting as she would like. Her captivity and the weakening effects of the poison may drive her to panic or behave irrationally. She may even attempt a futile and injurious escape of her own accord.

Although hardened by the wilderness, Anharniel still looks the young peasant girl from South Ithilien. She prides herself on being the equal of any man, and has cut her hair short in an effort to look more like a boy. When not recuperating from poisoned arrow wounds, Anharniel bears herself with a bravado that is often as comical as it is earnest.

Lady Terieth

Terieth is understandably concerned about Anharniel's safety. Still, she cannot conceive of any solution to her quandary that would not threaten the integrity of the Healers Hall or break with her commitment to non-violent methods of resistance. While she has considered complaining to Calimon that the presence of armed soldiers on her premises is a breach of the rules of the Hall as well as a flagrant disregard for her own authority, she fears that such vociferous objections might draw undue attention to her true motive of protecting her benefactor's daughter. The best Terieth can manage in the meantime is to make the mercenaries' stay in her hall an inhospitable one. (See Section 6.4.4 for more information.)

Parmandil (1321-1498)

Before its premises were commandeered by the Côr Aran, Parmandil was warden and chief Loremaster of the Hall of the Faithful in Pelargir. He retired to a private life on his estate beside the river Serni. Soon, though, he found himself invited by the Loremasters of Minas Anor to supervise the recovery and restoration of manuscripts from the ruins of the Royal Archive in Osgiliath. At the Lady Mórdulin's request, Parmandil was given the hospitality of the Healers Hall for as long as he chose to remain in the guarded city.

Parmandil has joined the ranks of Nimloth (see Section 7.5.2). He often uses the resources and influence afforded by his present task to aid in the escape of dissidents from the Usurper's power. It was Parmandil's possession of a small boat which enabled Terieth to transport herbs secretly across the river from the North Ithilien bank. Fortunately for Terieth, the aging Parmandil is hardly considered a threat to the King (despite his unconcealed outrage at the closing of the Hall of the Faithful and the excesses of Calimon's administration of the capital) and so is given considerable freedom of movement in Osgiliath.

The unforeseen capture of Bregor's daughter has been of great concern to Parmandil, since he is well aware of Anharniel's importance to both Terieth and Karan; but the presence of heavily armed Haradan soldiers on the premises of the Healers Hall has ruled out any conceivable means of aiding her escape. Although the loremaster would like nothing better than to see the Southron mercenaries evicted, he is painfully aware of his own physical limitations, and is bound in any case to Nimloth's code of non-violence.

Although retaining his vigor into his middle years, Parmandil appears frail and brittle, and is unused to the physical demands of work in Osgiliath. The venerable loremaster chooses to retain the robes of his former office, in the hopes that the guardianship of the Hall of the Faithful will one day be returned to him.

Rytva the Vole (1426-1507)

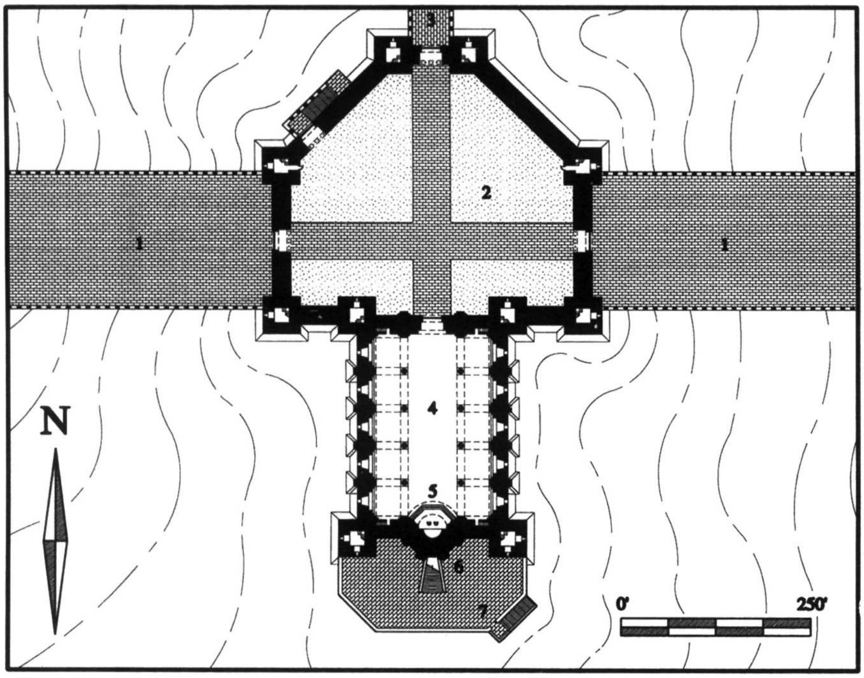
Rytva is an orphan of the siege of Osgiliath, in whose burning she lost her parents. Her nickname derives from her deftness at swimming the span of the river without detection by Calimon's patrol boats. Rytva ekes out her daily existence by making it her business to know everything that is happening in the guarded city, and by getting paid (usually with food) to keep her patrons informed.

Of late, Rytva has found work as a gopher for the loremaster Parmandil. She is also friends with both Cirator and the Lady Terieth, and helped the latter to establish contact with Bregor's band. Through her dealings with the Ithilien rebels, she became good friends with Bregor's daughter. Anharniel's capture has been a great distress to the Vole, who now seeks to unite Cirator, Parmandil and Terieth in some kind of plan for freeing Anharniel from her captors.

Rytva is clothed in dirty rags and is nearly indistinguishable from any other street urchin in Osgiliath. Only her golden hair and blue eyes mark her parents' Northman origin. She carries with her a trinket that her father gave to her before the war, which she will proudly display around her neck unless she thinks someone might try to rob her of it.

Saeros (1381-1441†)

Saeros is a merchant from Minas Ithil who was forced by the cessation of the river trade to diversify his principal wool trade to include coal requisitioned on behalf of the Minas Ithil and Minas Anor garrisons. Heruvorn's strip-mining of the South Ithilien countryside has not made him rich, but it has provided him with steady work. Saeros regularly travels the road between Minas Anor and Minas Ithil, and is often seen passing through Osgiliath.



Detail of Osgiliath

Unfortunately, Saeros (like many Ithilien-based merchants) is heavily in debt. When added to his fondness for drinking and gambling, this burden robs Saeros of what small gains he might have otherwise made. Constantly on the brink of bankruptcy—and even, at times, starvation—Saeros has turned to supplementing his income by illicit means.

In addition to his current partnership with Karan, Saeros has recently agreed to assist some shady characters undertake an even shadier activity: grave-robbing. The hallows of West Osgiliath have become the object of plunder for a certain Goromil in Minas Anor (see Section 7.7), and the merchant's constant traffic through the guarded city made him an ideal ally for smuggling in Goromil's henchmen and smuggling out stolen treasure.

Saeros performs his role well and is content with his share of the spoils, but Goromil realizes that the merchant's drinking problem (and his penchant for spending his ill-gotten wealth rather conspicuously) may in the long run pose a danger to secrecy. Saeros is aware of Goromil's displeasure with him, and is desperately seeking a way to impress his employer and so redeem his worth in Goromil's eyes.

The next foray into the hallows is scheduled to take place a few days after the attack on Bregor's outlaws, and Saeros is concerned that the matter of Anharniel not jeopardize his commitment to Goromil. The merchant's collaboration with Karan has not been entirely voluntary, and Saeros feels no particular loyalty to the Southron in any case. Saeros will try to avoid involving himself further in the affair unless there is a clear sign of material reward.

Saeros is a short, fat, middle-aged man. A florid complexion announces his poor health, and the stench of ale is constantly on his breath. Saeros is not a persuasive liar, and is often halting of speech even when he has nothing to hide. Few would trust him were he not so easily dominated by other wills.

CIRATOR

In order to attract the friendship of potential rebels in Osgiliath, Cirator must be able to offer something of value in return. Cirator's weaponsmithing skills are unrivaled by any man in the guarded city. He has prepared a forge for working the scraps of iron he has managed to scavenge from within the walls, but lacks the fuel to feed the fire.

Saeros attracted Cirator's attention as a possible source of coal for his furnace; but Cirator realized that nothing will come without its price, so he instructed the Vole to find out all about Saeros and his coal. It was not difficult for Rytva to uncover the merchant's involvement with Goromil's grave-robbing henchmen. Cirator intends to approach Saeros with an offer to assist Goromil's sacrilege in return for a regular supply of coal from the merchant's cargo. (See Section 6.4.4.)

6.6.3 THE SETTINGS

The number of guards keeping watch over Anharniel and Ciryatan's tomb is left to the discretion of the gamemaster. This way, the player-characters will be evenly matched. Remember to account for the advantages for surprise, which are listed below under "Aids."

The ruins of the Tower of the Dome lie some two thousand feet across the Anduin from The River's Edge. It will take at least twenty minutes to reach them by boat. Cirator's appointed meeting place with Saeros (after returning from the citadel) is another ten minute row along the canals of West Osgiliath.

6.6.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to free Anharniel from Karan's clutches without implicating Terieth or the Healers Hall in the process. Involvement in this affair should introduce player-characters to the mechanics and contingencies of getting things done in Osgiliath. It may provide a convenient plot device for getting outside characters into the guarded city. The most appropriate character backgrounds for this scenario include: (1) mercenary or underworld types from Minas Anor, (2) Lossarnach rebels inside Osgiliath, and (3) North Ithilien rebels from Bregor's band.

STARTING THE CHARACTERS

Goromil's henchman, Harmandil (see Section 7.7.2), will approach mercenary or "underworld" characters from Minas Anor with an offer of payment for roughing up some Southron scum in Osgiliath. Harmandil will not name his employer. Instead, he will intimate that he works for Captain Culcamalin, who has a score to settle with Karan's men for some past infidelity. The characters will be instructed to meet Saeros at noon in Minas Anor's shantytown. They are to pose as the merchant's bodyguards. He is supposed to be on his way back to Ithilien.

Inside Osgiliath, Cirator will contact rebels from Lossarnach and ask them to keep an eye on the merchant and his hired ruffians. He wants to make sure that the shady merchant follows through with his agreement. Cirator might bring a few of the adventurers along with him on Parmandil's boat (see below), and he will certainly want to employ them as henchmen during the tradeoff with Saeros. These characters will be informed as to when, and by which gate, the merchant will be entering the city.

Bregor will be informed of Anharniel's capture by the Vole. He may choose to send characters from among his band to lend assistance to the rescue; however, he will not send many because of the risks involved in crossing the Anduin without a boat. Alternately, Anharniel may have some close friends among the rebels who decide to take matters into their own hands.

Aids

Anharniel's would-be rescuers have four distinct advantages over Karan's men: (1) the Southrons are not expecting an attack, and Saeros will attempt to further distract them by his presence; (2) the Healers Hall is over a thousand feet away from the nearest city garrison; (3) although she has not been informed about the rescue attempt, Terieth is unlikely to aid Karan's men in any way; and (4) if the rescuers become hard-pressed and it seems as though their attempt is going to fail, the vigilant rebels from Lossarnach may step in as a last resort to aid them; if the rebels show their faces, though, none of Karan's men may be left alive, lest they identify the clansmen and so provoke retribution against their people.

The loan of Parmandil's boat is, of course, a crucial factor in Anharniel's escape from the city. If, however, it becomes unavailable for some reason (sunk, captured, etc.), a sufficient bribe may be able to persuade Saeros to hide the girl in his wagon and bring her past the eastern gates of the city safely. Likewise, characters who join Cirator on the boat to plunder Ciryatan's grave will have the advantage of surprise versus any guards they may come across in the ruins of the tower.

Obstacles

Apart from Karan's men, the principal obstacle for characters involved in Anharniel's rescue may be their own escape from the guarded city. Time is a critical factor, since a scuffle with Karan's men may very well be loud enough to eventually draw the attention of the Belthil garrison. Moreover, the attack on the Healer's Hall and Cirator's sack of the hallow must be coordinated in such a way that the exchange of Anharniel for Ciryatan's hoard can be made before either garrisons are alerted. A final obstacle is Cirator's multiple river crossings. If he is not careful, he may be spotted by one of Mardil's river patrols.

Outcomes

The outcome of this adventure depends primarily on the success or failure of Anharniel's rescue from the Healers Hall. The trade-off with Saeros and Goromil's men will go smoothly—as long as both Ciryatan's hoard and Bregor's daughter are present at the meeting place on the west bank of the river. If Neldorn and the mercenaries are unable to overcome Karan's men or manage to alert the city guard in the process, no meeting will take place. Harmandil may then decide to have Cirator killed in order to silence all potential witnesses to their villainy.

If, on the other hand, the rescue attempt succeeds, the plunder will be loaded aboard the merchant's wagons and concealed beneath his remaining cargo of coal. Anharniel will be surrendered into Cirator's care and he will use the boat to bring her to the safety of the North Ithilien shore. He will arrange privately with Saeros to have his promised coal-shipment deposited in an agreed-upon place somewhere in West Osgiliath. Then, he will take his leave of the grave-robbers until their next foray. Cirator will keep Parmandil's boat for himself, telling the loremaster that he was forced to abandon it to the Anduin in order to avoid detection by Mardil's patrols.

If the plundering of Ciryatan's hallow is successful, Goromil will be quite pleased with Saeros. He will also be happy with their newfound friend in the guarded city. After all, the violation of a tomb represents for Goromil the ultimate test for the limits of a man's scruples, and he is convinced by this that the weaponsmith is who he says he is. So great a sacrilege will not, however, be without its negative consequences.

The plunder of one of the royal hallows of Osgiliath is an abomination in the eyes of the Dúnedain. Such a deed will draw much unwanted attention upon Parmandil's restoration work. The river will henceforth be closely patrolled. All entrances to the ruined hallows will be heavily guarded. This will cause difficulties not only for Goromil, but for Terieth as well, since the movement of goods across the Anduin from Ithilien will be rendered all the more dangerous. Cirator may very well intervene in this affair and persuade Saeros to smuggle the healing herbs into the city himself, thereby further concreting Terieth's trust in the weaponsmith's loyalist commitments.

In addition to these complications, Goromil's sudden wealth may have brought upon him trouble of an entirely different sort. For among the treasures of Hyarmendacil's general is an artifact of dark design which will spell disaster for the greedy tomb-robber: the Vase of Dreams (see Section 7.7). Nonetheless, the evil influence of this thing will not take effect until the Vase is long gone of the guarded city.

6.6.5 ENCOUNTERS

Depending on their point of entry into this adventure, player-characters might be absent from the encounters which precede "Goromil Hires Muscle." In this case, these events should be treated as part of the background to the action. On the other hand, characters previously unconnected to the plot could be easily find their way in simply by eavesdropping on one of the conversations at The River's Edge. They might also stumble upon Goromil's mercenaries in mid-rescue. Because the scenario is designed from the perspective of characters attempting to thwart Karan's designs, the encounter list could provide a corresponding vantage point for servants of the Côr Aran, or others who would most likely work to hinder Anharniel's escape.

Parmandil Discovers Ciryatan's Tomb (Day I)

On the afternoon of the day that Anharniel is wounded and captured in Ithilien, Parmandil and his restoration crew came across evidence of a tomb or crypt buried beneath the ruins of the Tower of the Dome. An inscription on the stone slab identified it as the resting place of Ciryatan, one of Hyarmendacil's generals. The Ethir laborers estimated that it would take at least four days to clear away enough rubble from the tomb entrance.

The discovery of Ciryatan's grave—the first of Osgiliath's royal hallows—represents significant progress for Parmandil's salvage mission. It will doubtless result in increased funding for his larger restoration project. The discovery will also draw the attention of the greedy Goromil, for the grave of a general from the noontide of Gondor's wealth and power may contain untold treasures. Parmandil will arrange for a guard to be set, but has no knowledge of the active presence of tomb-robbers in Osgiliath and so will not think to take any special precautions.

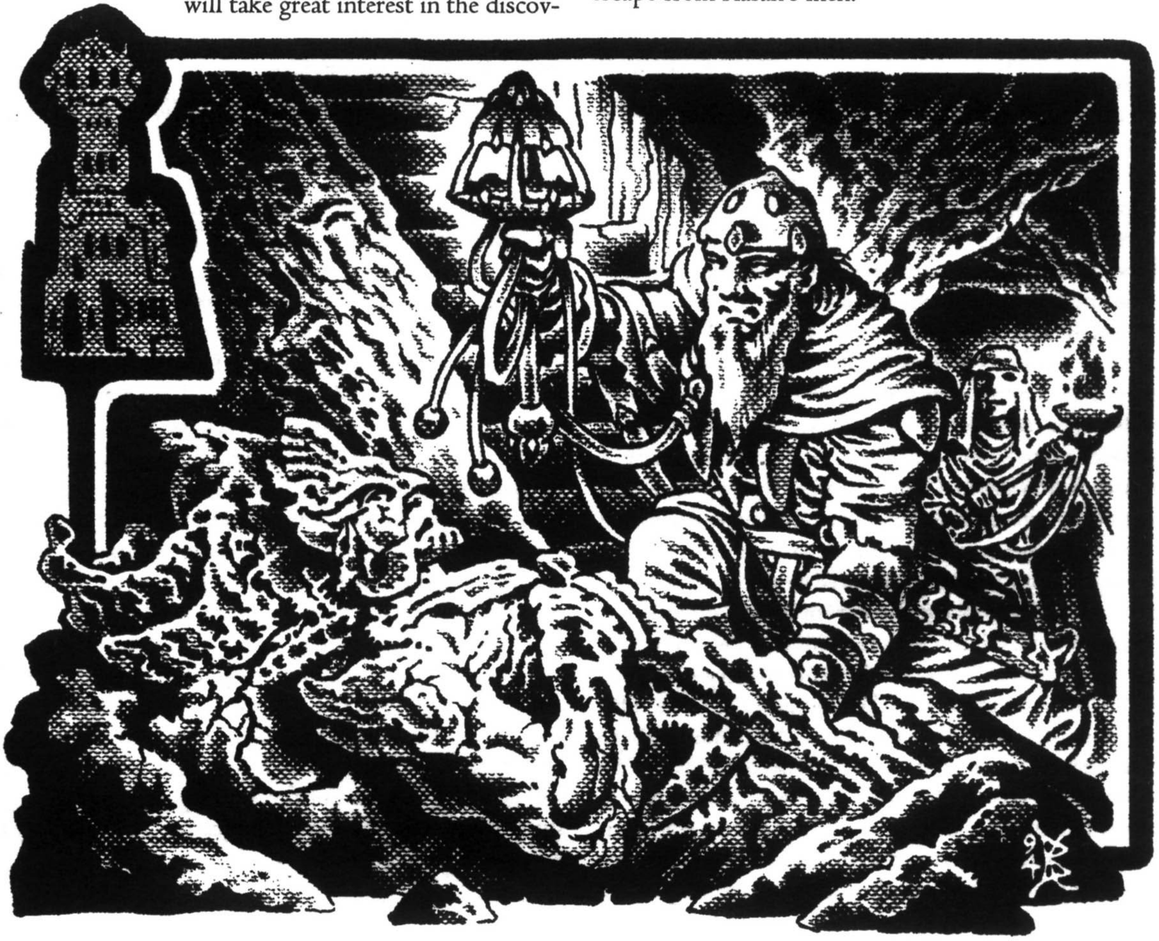
As is his wont, the loremaster avails himself of the hospitality of The River's Edge before retiring to the Healers Hall for the night. But the unexpected discovery of the tomb has kept him later than usual, and so he will not return to the Hall until after Anharniel's arrival. Rytva, however, is present when Karan's men enter the Hall. She will run off at once to The River's Edge to tell Parmandil what has happened.

An Evening at the River's Edge (Day 1)

The weaponsmith Cirator frequents The River's Edge in the evenings to keep himself abreast of the latest happenings in the guarded city. He has been a regular conversation partner of Parmandil's, and will take great interest in the discovery of Ciryatan's tomb. When Rytva bursts in with news of Anharniel's capture and Saeros' collaboration with Karan's men, the loremaster will leave the tavern and return at once to the Hall. Cirator, on the other hand, will seize upon this fortuitous coincidence of events. He will start spinning the beginnings of a cunning scheme to extract from Saeros the coal he so desperately needs for his underground weapon-forging enterprise.

Cirator awaits the merchant at The River's Edge, for he knows that the guard will not allow Saeros to pass the gates after nightfall. Cirator approaches Saeros that night with an offer and a threat. He reveals to the nervous merchant that he is aware of his involvement with Goromil's henchmen, and promises to disclose this information to Calimon unless Goromil is willing to consider a partnership with the weaponsmith.

Cirator tells Saeros of the discovery of Ciryatan's tomb and of its legendary riches (in somewhat exaggerated terms), suggesting to the merchant that he has access to a boat able to bear Goromil's grave-robbers to and from the ruins of the Tower. In return for this service, Saeros must agree to bring Cirator a regular supply of coal for his furnace whenever the merchant passes through the guarded city. In addition, Saeros must arrange for Anharniel's escape from Karan's men.



Tomb Robbers

The weaponsmith takes great pains to give Saeros the impression that his interest in Anharniel is purely mercenary, and that he intends to ransom her to the highest bidder—doubtless for the purpose of obtaining other critical resources for his forging. In reality, of course, Cirator's primary concern is to establish his supposed loyalist credentials with Nimloth. In order to impress upon Saeros and Goromil the need for an immediate answer, Cirator tells the merchant that they have only a few days before the tomb is opened and its contents removed by Parmandil and his men.

Saeros Talks to Goromil (Day 2)

Saeros departs Osgiliath the following morning to inform Goromil of Cirator's offer. He arrives in Minas Anor that late that afternoon. Fearful of how his patron might react to learning that their illicit activities in the guarded city have been discovered, Saeros slants his story to give Goromil the impression that it was he who made the offer to Cirator, and that the weaponsmith has had no previous knowledge of their grave-robbing. Goromil mistrusts the merchant's uncharacteristic initiative in this matter, but the temptation of the royal hallows overcomes his misgivings. He assents to the plan.

Cirator Talks to Parmandil (Day 2)

Cirator will approach Parmandil the next evening at The River's Edge. He will inquire about the progress of the excavation and the matter of Anharniel. The loremaster will unburden to the weaponsmith his concern for Anharniel's fate, lamenting his inability to conceive of any means of freeing her from Karan's slimy clutches. It is at this point that Cirator will openly confess to Parmandil for the first time his (feigned) loyalist sentiments. Cirator offers to arrange for Anharniel's rescue and safe return to Ithilien as a proof of these claims.

Though still somewhat wary, Parmandil is deeply moved by Cirator's pledge. He presses the weaponsmith for the details of his plan. Cirator will explain that Saeros is in his debt for a past favor, and that he could call upon the merchant to bring "outsiders" into the guarded city to dispatch Karan's men. Cirator realizes that violence runs against the grain of the healers, but he challenges Parmandil to find any other possible solution to their quandary. At this stage, the loremaster is prepared to sanction the use of force to free Bregor's daughter from certain doom.

Nevertheless, Cirator also explains that he will require the use of Parmandil's boat. He wants to ferry Anharniel out of Osgiliath and across the Anduin to Ithilien. This the loremaster readily grants him. Parmandil fails to realize that he is assisting the most unscrupulous of men to defile the very hallows he has been attempting to restore. Banking on Goromil's cooperation, Cirator instructs Parmandil to remain with Anharniel and Terieth at the Healers Hall during the following evening (when the rescue is planned).

Goromil Hires Muscle (Day 3)

Goromil decides to quickly send the merchant back to Osgiliath with his henchmen. He is well aware of the time required to plunder Ciryatan's tomb, and the brief window of opportunity before it is opened by Parmandil's men. He will instruct his chief cohort, Harmandil, to hire a few mercenaries to take care of Anharniel's escape from the Healers Hall. Thus, his regular henchmen will be able to plunder the tomb simultaneously. His intention is to hold a "trade-off"—Anharniel in exchange for the spoils—to ensure that Cirator does not go back on his bargain. (See "Starting the Characters" above for further details.)

Saeros Returns to Osgiliath (Day 3)

Saeros enters West Osgiliath by the Thoronúmen Gate just before dark. He is accompanied by the hired mercenaries and by Goromil's regular henchmen: Harmandil, Amdir, Neldorn and Ringmir (see Section 7.7.2). Harmandil's plan is to send Neldorn with the mercenaries to break Anharniel out of the Healers Hall. Meanwhile, Amdir, Ringmir, and Harmandil will accompany Cirator on the boat to the citadel to plunder the tomb. Goromil is to wait for Neldorn and the mercenaries at an appointed place. There, they will wait with Anharniel at the river bank for the return of the others.

The Rescue Attempt (Day 3)

The gamemaster may position Karan's men anywhere on the floor plan of the Healers Hall, depending on how many of them there are (see "Aids" above). The Southron soldiers are vigilant, but unprepared for an outright attack. Neldorn will use his burglary skills to gain stealthy entrance to the grounds of the Hall, but he will not engage the Southrons in combat unless absolutely necessary (mostly out of cowardice). Instead, he will instruct the mercenaries to avoid actually killing Karan's men. Neldorn prefers to neutralize them.

As soon as fighting breaks out, Parmandil will attempt to keep Terieth out of harm's way. The loremaster may even try to directly assist the rescuers, although he will refrain if there is any chance he might alert Karan's men. He has, of course, signalled Anharniel of the anticipated rescue, and has hidden some provisions and a dagger for her escape to Ithilien. By this time, Anharniel will be strong enough to walk. She will still need to be carried, though, if the group plans to move at a faster pace.

The Vole will be watching everything from outside the Hall, but will intervene only if Anharniel's life is directly threatened. She will not otherwise reveal herself to the rescuers. Instead, she will follow them unnoticed to the west bank of Anduin and wait there for the trade-off. She will also keep an eye out for any city guards that might stumble upon Saeros and the mercenaries, and will try to dissuade or distract them.

Plundering Ciryatan's Hallow (Day 3)

Cirator will meet Goromil's henchmen at The River's Edge (where Parmandil's boat is docked). The four of them will leave the tavern together and check to make sure that they are not seen by anyone. Then, they will row out to the ruins of the Tower. During the crossing of the river, the gamemaster may wish to have them avoid the detection of a patrol boat or two.

It will be no trouble at all for the seasoned grave-robbers to knock the guards unconscious without attracting any further attention from the citadel. In a matter of minutes, the tomb door will then be rolled aside. (The gamemaster can always make this more difficult if player-characters are present.) The tomb of Hyarmendacil's general far-surpasses the expectations even of Cirator. It is filled with all manner of gold and silver and precious stones crafted into objects of beauty and wonder (most of which Goromil will be forced to melt down in order to fence). All considered, Ciryatan's hallow contains treasure equal to roughly three thousand pieces of gold.

6.7 ADVENTURE: THE HUNTED

To the vast majority of its denizens, Osgiliath is a prison. For others, however, the guarded city is one of the most secure refuges within the Usurper's realm. Although fenced in by nigh impregnable walls, Osgiliath is freer from the watchful eye of Castamir's men than Gondor's other cities. In general, this fact does not trouble the Côr Aran; however, should one of their own number defect and vanish without a trace among the dingy streets of the guarded city, it would be a grievous blow to the security of Caramir's organization. It would also prove a great boon to the enemies of the King.

6.7.1 A TALE OF MANHUNTS AND MISSING PERSONS

Caramir is a troubled man. It has only just come to his attention that Cirator, an agent who he assigned to watch over his cousin the King, was arrested seven months ago on charges of treason and sentenced to confinement in Osgiliath. Still more troubling, Caramir has learned that Cirator somehow succeeded in convincing Angbor that he was still operating secretly under Caramir's command. Moreover, since his arrival in the guarded city, Cirator has managed to secretly access the Côr Aran's files from the Pelargirean Archives. And as if things were not already bad enough for the leader of the Côr Aran, Cirator has just vanished.

Caramir received a report in Angbor's name that alerted him to Cirator's disappearance. This was surprising enough, for Caramir had believed that Cirator had always been at the Lord's House in Pelargir. The revelation led him to investigate heretofore neglected (or suppressed) information about Cirator's arrest and conviction by the King. He also inquired about Cirator's continued appropriation of files from the Pelargirean Archives, an acquisition attributed to an unspecified "mission" Cirator was supposedly undertaking in Osgiliath.

Caramir is furious about the scope and nature of such a close security leak. He intends to orchestrate a thorough investigation of all potentially negligent parties. His first order of business, though, is to find out what Cirator has been up to these past months. He needs to locate the recalcitrant agent, and apprehend him for questioning. Should it be proven that Cirator has willfully diverged from his original mission directives, Caramir needs to eliminate him. This is, in Caramir's view, an all too likely eventuality.

Cirator's true "mission" in Osgiliath is, of course, Castamir's doing. His recent severance of contact with Angbor's Côr Aran was an intentional move on his part to facilitate the King's private goals in the guarded city. (See Section 6.4.4.) The report Caramir received about his "disappearance," although purportedly sent by Angbor, was in reality written from the hand of Cirator himself. The crafty Crow seeks to provoke Caramir to send an investigatory team from Pelargir into Osgiliath. Thus, he can use Caramir's men as leverage against Angbor, whom Cirator views as a potential impediment to his plans in the guarded city.

After the Tomb Robbers

Cirator has profited from his association with Goromil's tomb robbers (see Section 7.8). The merchant Saeros smuggled in coal and iron for Cirator's forging activity, and the former's assistance in Anharniel's rescue from the clutches of Karan's men has established Cirator as a trusted loyalist in the guarded city (see Section 6.6). The grave robbers' success, though, has recently drawn too much attention from the public eye. Their collaboration with Cirator has grown less, leaving Cirator with a pressing need to find another source of raw materials for the homegrown uprising he is planning in Osgiliath.

Cirator has just established contact with the people of Lossarnach who are trapped inside the walls of Osgiliath. He sees in them ideal compatriots for his revolt against Calimon. Unfortunately, even with Saeros' shipments of forging materials, Cirator cannot hope to arm so large a group through his own efforts. Instead, he has taken another tact for obtaining the requisite tools of rebellion: blackmail.

By means of a careful search through the Côr Aran's files concerning the commanding officers stationed in the guarded city, Cirator was able to discover potentially scandalous information about two of Calimon's lieutenants, Damrod and Gelmir. He might use the records to compel them to commit treason against the King by secretly providing arms to the Lossarnach rebels in exchange for continued silence about their sordid past.

This plan proved successful, but was soon complicated when Cirator discovered that Angbor was a co-conspirator in the lieutenants' past crimes. Cirator realized that he could not afford to maintain contact with the Côr Aran in Osgiliath without jeopardizing the effectiveness of his blackmail operation. Moreover, Cirator knew that he would need outside help to keep Angbor from disrupting his plans. So, he sent word to Pelargir of his own disappearance, and therefore presence, in Osgiliath.

PARTNERS IN CRIME

Angbor, Damrod, and Gelmir obtained the positions they now hold as a result of their support of the confederate cause. This began with their involvement in the Linhir revolt of 1432. While their comrade Orodreth rallied the folk of Linhir to the rebel cause, Angbor and the two brothers overthrew King Valacar's Coinmaster at the Linhir Mint—which they promptly plundered in the ensuing confusion. They succeeded in hiding their ill-gotten loot with some relatives in Pelargir; however, they were unable to access it during the course of the war, due to their participation in the siege of Osgiliath, and their subsequent appointments in that city after Castamir's coronation in 1437.

Since then, the three conspirators have arranged for their plunder to be smuggled in small quantities upriver to Osgiliath by means of the regular grain shipments that arrive from Pelargir. The chests of treasure are buried in the grain bins aboard these vessels. Just before the ships reach their destination, the chests are dumped into the river at a pre-arranged location, whence they are recovered at a later date by Damrod or Gelmir's men. This ongoing process of relocating and consolidating their loot has not gone unnoticed by Cirator.

Cirator learned from the Vole of the mysterious chest-dumpings by the grain ship crews, and ordered files from the Pelargirean Archive pertaining to the two lieutenants. The files from the Côr Aran made no mention of their illegal activities, but Cirator noted that both men had been in Linhir at the time of the uprising and had reported on the theft of the Mint. When he managed to recover one of the chests from river bottom and determine its contents, Cirator had no doubt about the identity of the culprits.

Eventually, Cirator made his presence known to Damrod and Gelmir, threatening exposure of their criminal activity unless they agreed to smuggle weapons into the guarded city on behalf of the Lossarnach rebels. The brother's greed (and fear of discovery) far outweighed their sense of patriotism, and they began to comply with Cirator's demands. They did not hesitate to warn their co-conspirator, Angbor, of this troubling new development. Cirator had not revealed his name to the lieutenants, but Angbor began to wonder about the identity of their blackmailer, and how he had been able to make the connection between the smuggled treasure and the theft of the Linhir Mint.

As the Côr Aran's files continued to arrive from Pelargir on the Linhir uprising and related matters, there was little doubt left in Angbor's mind that this was Cirator's doing. This caused Angbor to panic, fearing that he too might become implicated in the crime unless Cirator was eliminated. But the wary Cirator recognized Angbor's hand in a failed assassination attempt, and promptly vanished into the tangled maze of Osgiliath. Now, Angbor has concentrated all of his energy and resources to seek out and destroy this interloper before the latter is able to warn Caramir or the King of his infidelity. Think how surprised (and terrified) Angbor will be when he finds out that Caramir has just received a letter, purportedly from his hand, alerting Pelargir of Cirator's disappearance!

6.7.2 THE NPCS

CIRATOR

Cirator's intentions are complex. Above all, he must ensure that the Lossarnach rebels continue to receive arms from Gelmir and Damrod. This means that Cirator cannot afford to allow Caramir to learn about the conspirators in Osgiliath; at the same time, he must somehow neutralize the threat posed to him by Angbor, without jeopardizing the secrecy of his mission for the King. His plan is to make contact with his hunters from Pelargir, and persuade them to remain in Osgiliath as surety against reprisal from Angbor until the men of Lossarnach are fully armed. This strategy entails disclosing something about his mission as well as Angbor's thievery.

Castamir has given Cirator the mission of provoking a successful uprising in the guarded city, in order to convince the Council of Gondor that Osgiliath has sunk to such a depth of anarchy and disorder that it could not possibly be restored to its former royal honors. At the same time, Castamir does not want this revolt to be so great that it might actually endanger his position in the north. For this reason, Cirator has chosen the men of Lossarnach—a relatively small group, but well-known for their hatred of the Usurper—to accomplish this limited goal. (See Section 6.4.4 for more information.)

ANGBOR

When confronted with Caramir's investigators, Angbor will be understandably tight-lipped about what he really knows of Cirator's disappearance. His main objective will be to determine how much these men know about his own involvement, and what he must do to keep them from discovering his association with Damrod and Gelmir—up to and including killing them off. Therefore, while making a pretense of cooperation towards Caramir's men, Angbor will in fact do everything in his power to thwart their mission. (See Section 6.4.4 for more information.)

Lieutenant Gelmir (1402-1441†)

Gelmir is the lieutenant of Thoronúmen, the central section of West Osgiliath, and his gate guards the road to Minas Anor. He was one of the rebels leaders in Linhir who rallied the city to revolt in 1432. During the siege of Osgiliath, Angbor persuaded him to turn against his comrade Orodreth. Gelmir also received his appointment at Angbor's request, following the siege. Gelmir is somewhat incompetent at his job and is often the subject of local humor among the inhabitants of West Osgiliath—unlike Angbor, Gelmir has little to look forward to in the future.

Gelmir is a weak-willed coward, who allows others to guide (or misguide) him to often disastrous consequences. But his cowardice can sometimes lead to unnecessary brutality against the people. Calimon enjoys watching Gelmir grovel and often threatens (half in jest) to depose him of his appointment should he fail to keep Thoronúmen under control. Gelmir takes these asides quite seriously and makes every effort to suppress signs of unrest in his district.

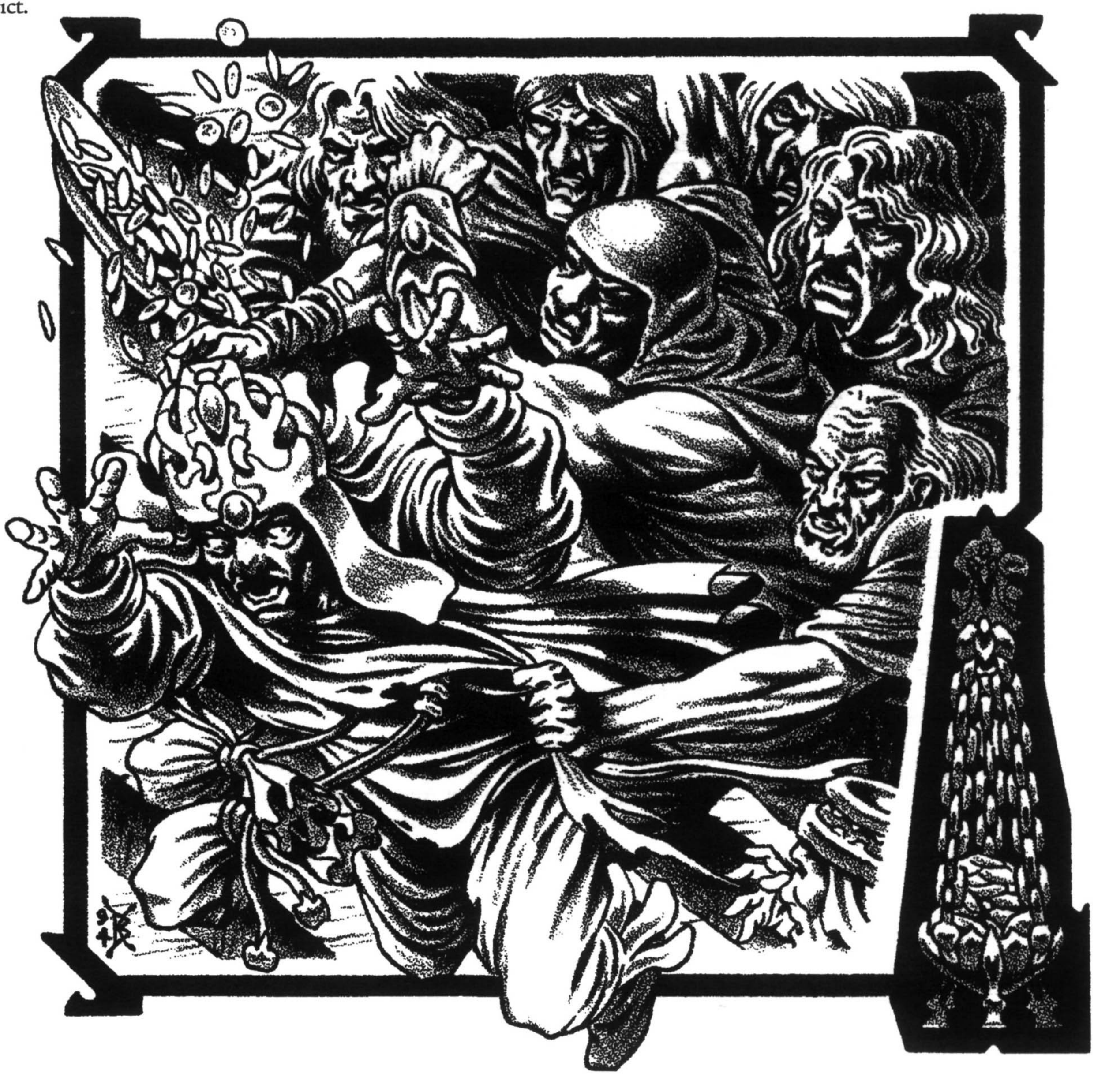
Lieutenant Damrod (1386-1441†)

Damrod is the lieutenant of Lumbar, the heptonard adjacent to that of his younger brother Gelmir. He is clearly the guiding partner of the Linhir Mint theft, and was responsible for planning out the logistics of moving the money to Pelargir, and now to Osgiliath. He is a much more competent officer than his brother, but equally hates the guarded city and hopes one day to retire with the loot in some remote estate in Lamedon.

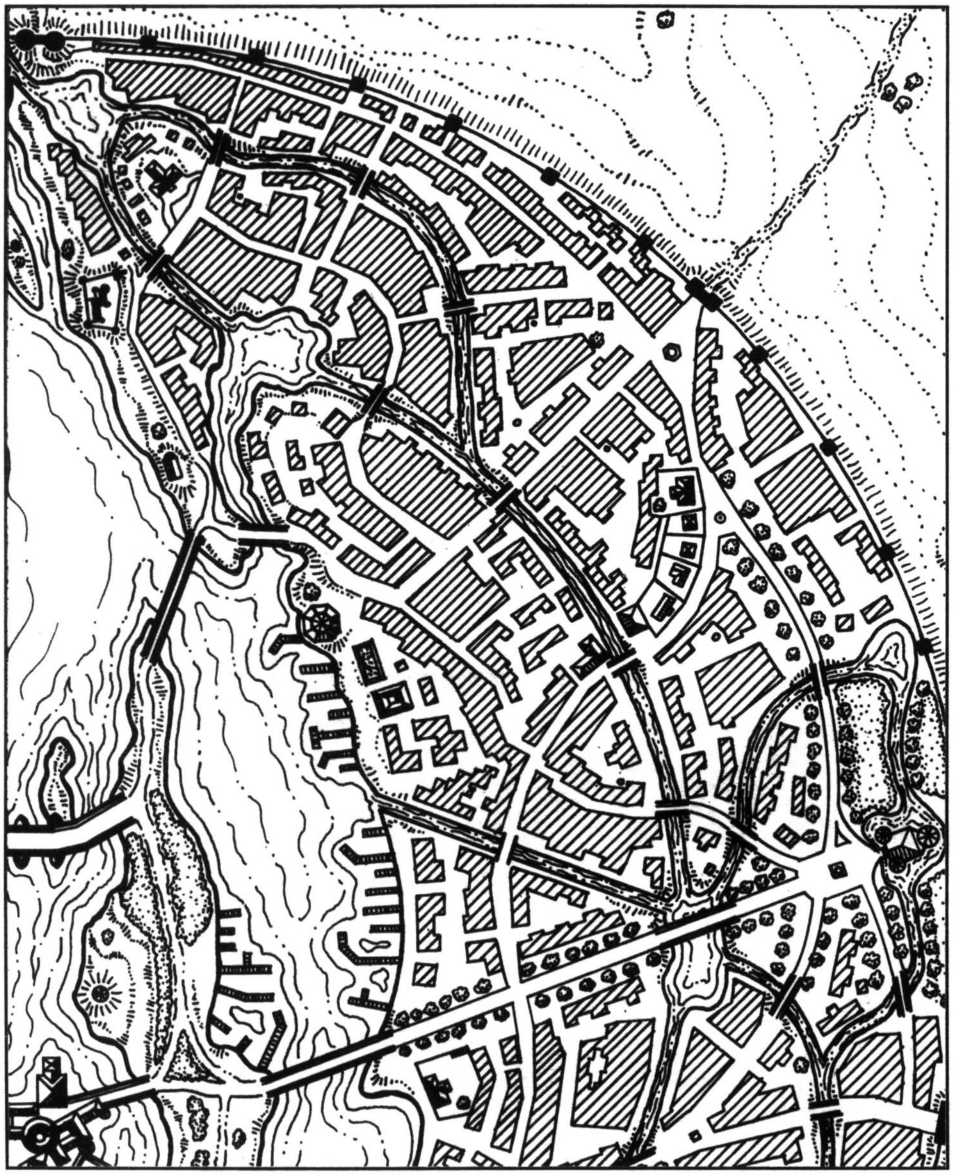
Damrod is unforgiving and contemptuous of the people and makes no effort to conceal this. He considers himself his brother's keeper, and is constantly taking measures to ensure that Gelmir's incompetence not make himself look bad.

Telcontar (1412-1586)

Telcontar is a native of Dunlostir in Calenardhon, who was accused of a crime he didn't commit and was sent to the prison-mines of Anfalas. There he met Cealen, former leader of the Lossarnach rebels, and with him escaped the



Assault on tax collectors at the steps of the mint



The Wilwarin heptonard of Osgiliath

mines over the passes of the Ered Nimrais into his homeland of Calenardhon. Finding his native town occupied by Castamir's men and his people sent to Osgiliath, Telcontar resolved to accompany Cealen on his own return to aid his people in their oppression.

In the guarded city, Telcontar has come to be the spokesman and patron of the Calenardhon prisoners, but is also intent on helping his Lossarnach allies in their planned insurrection. It was through him that Cirator first made an alliance with Cealen. In the latter's present state of hiding, Telcontar relays all communication between Cirator and Celebrin.

Telcontar is a young Dúnadan of pure lineage (a rare sight among Osgiliath's imprisoned populace). His years spent in the prison-mines of Anfalas have hardened Telcontar and made him cautious of all his movements in the guarded city. He is never neglectful of precautions for secrecy and rarely reveals his true identity to anyone.

Celebrin (1404-1441†)

Celebrin is a Côr Aran informant in Osgiliath and the last person known to Angbor to have seen Cirator. Celebrin is, in fact, an ally of Cirator's and a mediary between he and the Lossarnach rebels. Celebrin was once a merchant from Tharbad, but had the misfortune of falling in with Telcontar when the latter was accused of treason against the Usurper. He joined Telcontar and Cealen in their escape from the prison-mines of Anfalas, and chose to remain with them in Osgiliath to carry on the fight against Castamir.

Celebrin is aware of Cirator's machinations in the guarded city, and knows to expect a company of Côr Aran from Pelargir. He has been instructed to assess the demeanor of the newcomers, to determine whether they can be trusted with Cirator's secret, but Celebrin will not himself reveal anything of Cirator's whereabouts until he receives authorization from Telcontar. Cirator left in Celebrin's keeping all of the archive files he ordered through Angbor, but Celebrin will not disclose their location to the investigating Crows until he is certain they can be trusted.

Celebrin does not look like the informant or rebel type. He is a mild-mannered businessman who has seen better times; but he uses his even-handedness to conceal a shrewd and calculating mind, which he applies to all the contingencies of his life in the guarded city. Not exactly a prisoner, Celebrin is here to fight the Usurper, whose self-aggrandizing attitude toward his northern subjects unjustly robbed the merchant of both his possessions and social standing.

6.7.3 THE SETTINGS

The only setting of importance to this adventure is Celebrin's flat (located in the Wilwarin; see Section 6.2.7), where he will meet the characters and later be assassinated. Celebrin resides in the third story of a dilapidated stone building, and his apartment consists of a single room with a rickety wooden balcony overlooking the street. Celebrin has hid Cirator's files from the Côr Aran in the mattress of his bed—an obvious place to look, but Angbor is not aware that they are in the informant's possession.

6.7.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to hunt down the missing Crow, and then decide whether to aid him or thwart his designs in Osgiliath. The purpose of the adventure is to get player-characters involved in Castamir's machinations in the guarded city prior to the Day of Memory, when the Lossarnach uprising is scheduled to take place (see Section 6.8.1). In the course of unraveling the mystery of Cirator's disappearance, the characters may find themselves fighting for their lives against Angbor's own assassins, bent on keeping the Linhir Mint conspiracy from being revealed.

Starting the Characters

This adventure is designed exclusively for Côr Aran characters in the employ of Caramir (though it could be run from the perspective of Angbor's men as well). Caramir will assemble a team of reliable agents in Pelargir to investigate the matter of Cirator, and send them to Osgiliath by ship with a mandate for Angbor to render all due assistance and cooperation in this endeavor. The characters will be shown Angbor's (i.e., Cirator's) letter.

Caramir will inform the characters of the circumstances surrounding Cirator's arrival and activity in Osgiliath, but he will not be able to tell them much about which files were pulled from the archives at Cirator's request, since Caramir has not had time to investigate this yet. Caramir will impress upon his team that it must be discovered whether or not Cirator has in fact "defected" to the enemies of the King, as his behavior would seem to indicate. If this is the case, the characters have standing orders to kill him on sight if he cannot be apprehended for questioning.

Aids

The only true aid to locating the evasive Cirator is Telcontar, who will contact the characters at the opportune moment. Should the characters discover the files in Celebrin's flat, this may give them further clues about Cirator's activities in Osgiliath. They will not contain any direct clues to Angbor's, Damrod's and Gelmir's involvement in the robbery of the Linhir Mint; they will, however, establish a connection between the three men—a connection which Angbor is now anxious to downplay.

Obstacles

Finding Cirator need not be difficult, since he himself intends to make contact with the Pelargir team. Angbor will be the principal obstacle in reaching this stage, however, as he is prepared to take any measure necessary to eliminate all threats to the disclosure of his involvement in the robbery. Another obstacle (to Cirator) may be the difficulty in convincing the Pelargir team that he is in fact acting on behalf of the King, particularly since this has taken the form of supplying the rebels with weapons.

Outcomes

If the characters succeed in contacting Cirator, there may be three possible outcomes. They may not believe Cirator's claim to be working for the King and seek to apprehend or eliminate him, in which case they will have the fully armed Lossarnach rebels to contend with. They may accept that Cirator is who he says he is, but attempt (against his wishes) to bring Angbor and his co-conspirators to justice, thus necessitating a new source of arms for Cirator's mission. Finally, they may accept both Cirator's claim and his mission, and seek to aid him in seeing to its completion, which would require that they remain in Osgiliath and avoid leading their superior in Pelargir to suspicion. If they waver in their support, Cirator may attempt to bribe them with a promise of a share in the Linhir treasury when his mission is accomplished.

6.7.5 ENCOUNTERS

Talking to Angbor

Angbor will receive the characters at his office in the Citadel of Stars, but will be unaware of their reason for coming. When he reads Caramir's mandate, he will of course realize that someone else sent the initial letter in his name (which will alarm him). Angbor cannot imagine why Cirator would have forged such a letter, but suspects that one of his contacts in Osgiliath did so on his behalf. If he learns from the characters that Cirator himself is under suspicion, Angbor will offhandedly attempt to glean more information off them that might prove useful to his own survival. It is clear to him that something is afoot, and he wants to find out what it is.

Depending on how open the characters are with him, Angbor may either send a Côr Aran officer with them, or have them shadowed by his men from a distance. If they appear to be a real threat to his involvement in the Linhir plunder scheme, Angbor will have no qualms in sending a group of Crows to assassinate the "impostor" agents from Pelargir. In any event, Angbor will be discreet when interacting with the characters. He will tell them that the informant Celebrin was the last man Cirator was seen with. After all, it was Celebrin who first alerted Angbor to Cirator's disappearance.

Meeting with Celebrin

Celebrin can be found in his old flat in Wilwarin (see Section 6.7.3). He has been anticipating the arrival of men from Pelargir, and will gladly recount to them his association with Cirator, pretending ignorance of the latter's true mission in Osgiliath. Celebrin will be necessarily vague when describing his friends' operations, but will suggest another contact named Telcontar who could answer more of their questions.

Celebrin will instruct the Vole (see Section 6.6.2) to take the characters to Telcontar, while he goes to take care of some "business." In fact, the Vole will lead them on a wild goose chase through Helluin and Menelvagor, eventually attempting to ditch the characters. This will give Celebrin enough time to inform Telcontar of the characters' arrival. Celebrin will then return to his flat to await Cirator's instructions, but will be murdered there by one of Angbor's men, fearing that the characters might learn too much from him.

Celebrin's Death

The gamemaster should decide whether the characters return in time to witness Celebrin's death, or whether they arrive later to find his corpse, shot through the heart with a poisoned arrow. In either case, characters who realize that the populace of Osgiliath possess no weapons should be alerted to the likelihood that Angbor or Calimon (or Cirator) may have arranged the assassination. Characters who search through Celebrin's flat may discover the Côr Aran's files on Damrod and Gelmir.

Meeting Cirator

Depending on the characters' behavior, Cirator may attempt to contact them through Telcontar before or after they have followed the trail to Damrod and Gelmir. Telcontar will arrange a safe meeting place somewhere in East Osgiliath, but Cirator will see to it that there are armed Lossarnach rebels close at hand should he be unable to convince the characters to aid him in his cause. Should the characters decide to disregard Cirator's hopes for cooperation, but the gamemaster wishes to give them a fighting chance against the rebels, Angbor's men who have been shadowing them may appear on the scene to weaken the adversary.

Cirator wants the characters to remain in Osgiliath, pretending to continue their search for him. Because they are under official mandate from Caramir, their presence will ensure that Cirator is able to continue blackmailing the three conspirators for arms under threat of revealing their movement of the treasure (see "Outcomes," Section 6.7.4).

Talking to Damrod and Gelmir

Immediately after sending the characters to talk with Celebrin, Angbor will warn his co-conspirators of the arrival of the Pelargir group. Neither of the brothers knows exactly what to expect from the newcomers, but they will do their best to conceal any nervousness should the characters approach them. They will deny knowing a man named Cirator. Just to make sure they do not talk, Angbor sends an archer to dispose of them if things begin looking bad.

6.8 ADVENTURE: THE MEMORY OF EVIL

The Usurper officially eschews responsibility for the burning of Osgiliath and the massacre of its inhabitants. An unintended consequence of this claim has been the lack of an excuse for rejecting petitions from the families of the slain to be allowed to gather once a year at the site of the tragedy to mourn their dead. This gathering takes place on the 12th day of Narbeleth and is called the Day of Memory. For the Usurper's men it is a day of fear.

6.8.1 A TALE OF VENGEANCE AND REVELATION

As the Day of Memory approaches, so too do the impending deaths of three men—Angbor, Gelmir, and Damrod. In addition to being responsible for the robbery of the Linhir mint in 1432, these men share the guilt of having betrayed an innocent man—Orodreth of Morthond—into murdering Eldacar's son Ornendil, the event which provoked the burning of Osgiliath in 1437. Now the betrayed one returns in secret to the guarded city to wreak a terrible vengeance upon his betrayers.

Others too seek vengeance on this coming day of memorial. With Cirator's aid, the men of Lossarnach are ready to strike back against their oppressors in Osgiliath; and they intend to start an uprising that will enable them to escape the guarded city with their families, and so begin their flight for freedom to the mountainous vales of their homeland. Their success will complete Cirator's task of promoting disorder in Osgiliath for the Usurper's propaganda purposes.

The harbinger of these events is Colfen, who has just arrived in the guarded city by boat from the Ethir, bearing news of Neithan's death at the hands of the Ethir-outlaws (see Section 5.8.1). Angbor, Gelmir, and Damrod rejoice at this good news, believing they have at last escaped all danger of reprisal for their crimes. Three days pass without disturbance while mourners swell the city's population; Calimon almost dares to hope this memorial will pass without unrest; and then the storm breaks.

6.8.2 THE NPCS

Calimon

Calimon dislikes the Day of Memory because (in his view) it brings together too many people with bitter memories of 1437. Greater still is his dislike for the Lady Mórdulin, who had first demanded the institution of such a memorial, because of her popularity among the people as the betrothed of their dead captain. Her presence in the city turns the ill-feeling of the people against Calimon, whose emblem of dominion is the sword by which Ornendil was slain. It hangs upon the wall of the throne room above the young Steward's seat of judgment as both a warning and an insult to the people. Should Calimon ever lose possession of the sword, the resentment of Osgiliath might turn to open rebellion. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

CIRATOR

Cirator's objective is to see that the Lossarnach revolt is carried through (Its actual success or failure is less important than its public visibility and affect.). With the completion of his blackmail scheme against Gelmir and Damrod (see Section 6.7.1), Cirator has less leverage over Angbor, who might cause problems, since he is vaguely aware that an uprising of some kind is being planned. Cirator views Neithan with indifference, though he would like to know who he is and why he is attempting to kill off "his" lieutenants. (See Section 6.4.4 for more information.)

CEALEN

Cealen was a close friend to Ornendil, and has vowed vengeance upon his murderer; he, however, believes that Neithan is dead. If he learns that Neithan has been behind the death's of Calimon's men and the spurring of general rebellion against the Usurper, he may recant of his vow and take Neithan in as an ally. Neithan, however, will be the least of his concerns with the task of organizing his people to win their freedom from the guarded city before him. (See Section 6.4.4 for more information.)

ANGBOR

Angbor was a childhood companion of Orodreth's and accompanied him on his road to self-destruction in the early years of the Kin-strife. When it became apparent to him that Calimon was bent on vengeance he tried to warn Orodreth of their peril, but soon realized that his friend had a reckless streak in him which refused to recognize the danger. Fearing for his own life, Angbor courted Calimon secretly during the siege and agreed to help deliver Ornendil into the hands of the captains in exchange for the favor of Pelargir. (See Section 6.4.4 for more information.)

GELMIR

Gelmir will be greatly troubled by the death of his brother, but will not reveal that he suspects Neithan's hand. In truth, the weak-minded and superstitious Gelmir believes the cloaked killer to be Ornendil's ghost come back to avenge himself now that Neithan is dead. During the last few days of his life, Gelmir will appear nervous to any whom he is around, though he may not be willing to explain the cause of his perturbation—his brother's death ought to be reason enough. (See Section 6.7.2 for more information.)

DAMROD

Damrod will not live to witness the majority of the adventure, since he is the first to die. He will make no connection between the theft of the sword and news of Neithan's death, believing instead one of the rebels to be the thief. This, however, will place the lieutenant on his guard, expecting trouble for the coming Day of Memory. (See Section 6.7.2 for more information.)

NEITHAN

Neithan has two goals in Osgiliath: vengeance on his betrayers and knowledge of his true identity as the descendant of Berúthiel. To accomplish both he has been given the Kuilëondo, the sorcerous gem that binds Tevildo, Prince of Cats (see Section 2.3.3). The Kuilëondo will give to Neithan cat-like powers of agility and perception which will enable him to steal into the guarded city unnoticed, and to hunt down his enemies. In return for this aid, Neithan has promised the Prince of Cats that he will seek out the abandoned gardens of the King's House, where the secret of Tarannon and Berúthiel's child was made known in an inscription.

By the combination of his magical assistance and the writing on the wall, Tevildo hopes to persuade Neithan that it is his destiny to free the cats from their binding and, with their aid, to bring peace and justice to the South-kingdom by supplanting the Usurper as King of Gondor. Neithan's success or failure in Osgiliath will have great consequences for Tevildo's (and Sauron's) future plans (see Section 2.3.3). Neithan is an alienated man, and the continued contempt in which his relatives and countrymen hold him has pushed him to the brink of madness—but only to the brink, and even in the guarded city, the city of his worst crimes, he wavers still.

COLFEN

Colfen helped to smuggle his friend into Osgiliath, and will remain there until Neithan leaves. Officially, Colfen is in the guarded city to visit with the Ethir enclave there, and he will be found in Helluin for the greater part of the adventure. However, Colfen will shadow Neithan's movements inside the walls, and will send his folk to monitor his progress. He will be wary of any who take too great an interest in Neithan's or his own doings, but is never adverse to winning allies, if their trust can be proven. (See Section 2.3.3 for more information.)

MÓRDULIN

Mórdulin will be staying at the Healers Hall with Terieth during the days preceding the memorial, and much of her time will be taken up with visiting the families of the slain. The theft of the sword will immediately signal to her the danger of violent uprising, and she will make every effort to determine the identity of the thief and to have him stopped from disrupting a bloodless consummation of the ceremonies. See "Encounters" section below for Mórdulin's reaction to the knowledge of Neithan's continued life. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

ESTEL

Estel's mental illness makes her highly unpredictable; often she will be incoherent and incapable of conversation. But at times she has dream-like visions of things that are hidden to others. At some time after Neithan's arrival in Osgiliath, Estel will insist to Mórdulin that her brother is still alive. Mórdulin attributes such utterances to delirium and gives them no credence. If the characters suggest to her the same, Mórdulin will begin to wonder about Estel's words and will question her further. (See Section 5.5.2 for more information.)

RASTARIN

Rastarin believes that Neithan is dead as Colfen has told her (unless she has seen the false burial in the Ethir; see Section 5.8.3). She is not sufficiently knowledgeable about his past to perceive her comrade's hand behind the events at Osgiliath. If, however, the characters are able to persuade her that Neithan is alive and in the city, her main goal will be to find him and aid him in any way that she can. This may include working with the rebels to stop him from killing Angbor if she is persuaded that this would be the best course of action for all concerned. In any event, she will assume that Neithan will need to escape Osgiliath when his purpose is fulfilled and will insist on taking him out on The Calm before the Storm. Rastarin may therefore prove an invaluable ally for the characters, in addition to being an important source of information.

Rastarin feels no loyalty to the rebels or to Eldacar, and certainly not to the Usurper. Rastarin regards Neithan to have been her one true friend and honors his memory. She was not in the Ethir when Neithan was ambushed, but she received a (suitably censored) first-hand account from Colfen of her comrade's death. She knows that Colfen is in Osgiliath, though she does not know the reason and has not spoken with him since her arrival. (See Section 5.8.2 for more information.)

6.8.3 THE SETTINGS

The relevant settings of action may vary for this adventure, depending on which point the characters enter into its events. The gamemaster should refer to the "City Layout" section for details about specific locations and their geographical relationship to each other.

6.8.4 THE TASK

The task occasioned by these events depends largely upon the motives of the player-characters in question. Rebel characters will attempt to seize this opportunity to rally the people to revolt. Côr Aran characters will be ordered to track down the sword and recover it before the people are incited to revolt. Characters who are former friends of Neithan, once they realize that he is the cloaked killer, will want to find him and perhaps even aid him. If the characters have come directly from the Lond Ernil adventure, they will most likely recognize the gem used by Iriel and will track it down (or they may already be in alliance with Neithan).

The general purport of the adventure is that characters should become aware that something more sinister and mysterious is at work in Osgiliath than mere political intrigue. With the aid and protection of a Maia spirit it is highly unlikely that Neithan can by force be stopped from achieving his ends; the point is to learn who this killer is and why he is doing these things.

STARTING THE CHARACTERS

There are several points of entry to this adventure. The most obvious would be for the player-characters to be members of the Lossarnach rebels or of some other dissident group for whom the theft of the sword would hold immediate consequences for action. Eldacar may have sent in spies from Rhovanion to help facilitate organized resistance during the uprising. Cirator would arrange for these to be brought into the city secretly and would initiate them to the difficulties involved in coordinating the various rebel groups. Angbor will certainly order his Côr Aran agents to investigate the theft of the sword.

AIDS

Because Osgiliath is a guarded city, movement within its walls and contact with groups inside may require the intervention of others. To what extent these persons are approachable depends on the identity and motives of the characters.

Cirator has access to many important people in Osgiliath. He is able to act as a liaison to the rebels and can introduce characters to their leaders if need be. He is also able to arrange a trap for those whom he deems a threat to his own mission. His popularity with many of the common people gives him both immediate manpower as well as a strong base of material resources from his clients.

Captain Rastarin's principal value is that she has a ship and freedom of movement throughout the city. The Calm before the Storm constitutes one way of reaching the central island without detection if the bridge and river are heavily guarded. She is also a convenient means of escape from the city if that becomes necessary. Rastarin's crew are loyal and will fight for her if she orders them to, but she will not sacrifice them for someone else's cause.

OBSTACLES

Osgiliath presents several obstacles to characters. Problems usually encountered in an urban setting (see Section 9.1.1) are all present in the ruined capital, only more so. Time may become another obstacle with the swift approach of the Day of Memory. Riot conditions make movement from one area of the city to another dangerous. The vigilance of the Ethir cultists and Angbor's machinations add to these general obstacles.

Colfen and the Ethir folk will protect Neithan with their lives. They will confront characters who attempt to follow Neithan's movements and judge whether they are a threat or potential allies. Colfen will disclose nothing about his friend that the characters do not already know, but will instead approach Neithan and ask what ought to be done about these interlopers. Colfen is trusted by Angbor and Calimon and is not above betraying the characters to their men if they prove troublesome. If this fails, the Ethir cultists will hunt them down. Cirator is not adverse to setting the characters up and laying the blame for some onerous deed upon their doorstep in the eyes of the people.

Outcomes

If Angbor's life is spared and Mórdulin is in possession of the sword, the Day of Memory will be observed in peace. If Angbor dies, auxiliary troops sent from Minas Anor to aid Calimon will bring fire and slaughter to the city once again.

6.8.5 ENCOUNTERS

The Theft of the Sword (5 Narbeleth)

On the day of his arrival in Osgiliath, Neithan will attempt to recover from the Dome of Stars the sword with which he slew Ornendil. At dawn he is stowed in one of the river boats of the Ethir cultists and rowed across to the tip of the island where the Ethir-folk labor to clear the ruins of the Tower of the Dome. From there he makes his way under cover of dark to the abandoned gardens of the King's House, and enters Berúthiel's courtyard to find the inscription telling that Tarannon Falastur's child was secretly fostered by the Lord of Morthond, thus confirming the truth of Tevildo's words to him.

Neithan destroys the inscription so that none will discover his true identity. After dark he makes his way to the Dome of Stars and kills the guards silently. He removes the sword from its place above Calimon's seat and steals away. If rebel characters have decided to steal the sword as well, Neithan will fight them for it but will not kill them if that can be avoided. The noise of the struggle alerts Calimon's guards and there is a chase.

Neithan will escape by leaping off the wall into the river and then making his way along the side of the bridge to the safety of the western city. If any other characters involved are captured, Calimon will hand them over to Angbor for questioning. When it becomes clear that the thief has escaped them, Côr Aran agents will be sent to investigate the scene of the crime and Angbor will order them to follow up any clues revealed by the captive rebel(s). If no one has been captured Angbor will send his men to Tirion to inquire as to the identity and motives of the rebels in stealing the sword.

Damrod's Death (7 Narbeleth)

Two days following the theft of the sword, Calimon called a meeting of his officers to discuss the portent. On his return from the island Damrod and his guard are attacked by Neithan. He unveils the White Face Heart and holds it before their gaping eyes. The lieutenant's mounted guard falls into a maddened frenzy and are scattered while Neithan reveals himself to Damrod and runs him through.

The terror-stricken guards are brought to the Healer's Hall to be tended, but will only gibber nonsense about a white face with cat's eyes. When Damrod's body is examined, it will become apparent that his assailants were not mere thieves—his weapons and belongings are all intact. The only thing missing is his insignia pendant. Inquiry about it reveals that he bore the coat of arms of Morthond under which he fought during the Kin-strife.

It is commonly known that Damrod fought for the rebel cause under Orodreth's command, but only Gelmir and Angbor know that these pendants were given to them by Neithan as a token of trust. During the same night a ship arrives at dock in West Osgiliath with the next grain shipment for Damrod's brother, Lieutenant Gelmir.

The Grain Shipment and Gelmir's Death (8 Narbeleth)

By morning, the combined troops of Damrod and Gelmir line the street and adjoining rooftops between the docks and Gelmir's tower. A train of eight horse-drawn wagons protected by Gelmir and a company of twenty mounted guards awaits the unloading of the grain sacks from the grain ship and proceeds toward the tower amid crowds of starving people.

Something catches Gelmir's eye on the road before him—Damrod's pendant has been left there as a sign by Neithan. Gelmir takes its meaning and without explanation abandons the grain for his tower. The rebels take this unforeseen opportunity to strike and a riot breaks out in the street. Gelmir rides to the safety of his tower and orders the doors barred. Neithan enters the tower from above and lands in the midst of Gelmir and his men, summoning the White Face.

The rebels make their way to the tower and the doors burst open with Gelmir's crazed guards desperately trying to escape. Neithan pursues Gelmir to the roof of the tower and ends his life. He casts the body down to the street below and brandishes the sword before the eyes of the people, and disappears behind the parapet. The crowds cry out that Ornendil's ghost has returned to avenge them and the grain riot escalates into a full-scale revolt. Characters coming upon Gelmir's corpse notice that his hand clutches his own pendant.

Angbor Buys "Protection" (9 Narbeleth)

With Gelmir's death, Angbor will begin to suspect that he is the next, and perhaps final, target of the assassin. He will reveal this to no one, but will consider the possibility that doom walks with the wielder of the sword and that his life is in genuine peril. If these fears are confirmed by the findings of his agents, Angbor will contemplate treason against Calimon in order to save his own skin. If force of arms will not avail against this seemingly unstoppable foe, Angbor is willing to bargain for his life.

Perceiving that Neithan's aims are not wholly alien to those of the rebels, Angbor will approach them and offer to do for them anything within his power if they will intercede on his behalf before the wielder of the sword. If the Côr Aran captain does not yet have a bargaining piece with the rebels, he will order his men to take captive the families of the rebels and threaten to hold their wives and children as a ransom for his own life—if he dies, they die.

If this takes place, the rebels (or their sympathizers) will find themselves in a difficult situation: to win the lives of their loved ones they must protect the life of one of their worst enemies, and attempt to persuade or even physically hinder Neithan from slaying him. This will not be an easy task, particularly if they are still in the dark as to the identity and motives of their elusive ally.

CONFRONTING NEITHAN (11 NARBELETH)

Angbor will await his doom in the protection of the fortress he has been building upon the ruins of the Tower of the Dome. By night, Neithan will enter the fortress and confront the chief of the Côr Aran and will fight with him to the dearth unless the characters can persuade him otherwise. If they attempt to intervene forcibly en masse, Neithan will draw once more upon Tevildo's powers.

Neithan has sworn to kill Angbor, and there is only one person in Osgiliath who stands a chance of altering that course of action: the Lady Mórdulin. Remorse for his ill-deeds has tortured Neithan since the day of the massacre, and before no one does guilt assail him so greatly as with Mórdulin. Were she to demand of him the sparing of Angbor's life, he would most likely accede to her wish.

It is, unfortunately, not that simple. Mórdulin eschews violence and will not easily be persuaded into helping the rebels; unless the immediate threat to the lives of their innocent families (or some similar circumstance) is underlined to her it is not likely that the Lady will be sympathetic to their overtures. Moreover, in Mórdulin's view Angbor is better off dead, as she holds him partly responsible for Ornendil's death. And she would regard Neithan likewise, at least outwardly, were he not her cousin. But though Mórdulin feels some measure of pity and compassion for Neithan, it is entirely up to the characters to convince her that he is worthy of her intervention in this matter. She will be deeply shaken by the news that her cousin still lives, and that alone ought to unsettle her emotions enough to be open to the rebels' bequests. Estel, too, will desire to see her brother.

Even if Mórdulin agrees to intercede for Angbor's life things will not go smoothly of their own accord. Once in each other's presence, Neithan and Mórdulin will both be torn by contrary emotions. Mórdulin will be unable to silence entirely the pain of the wounds her cousin has dealt to her and Neithan, though deeply affected by her presence and her urgings, will nevertheless feel constrained by his oath of vengeance to finish what he has begun, regardless of the consequences. If the characters fail to take an active role in mediating the ensuing dispute, it is likely to fail of its purpose and tragedy will repeat itself—Mórdulin's presence alone is probably necessary but not sufficient to avert catastrophe, and the players must ultimately be the ones who determine the outcome.

If Neithan stays his hand, Mórdulin will demand of him the sword as proof of his word. If this is done, Angbor will order the release of the prisoners (or whatever other promises he has made), Neithan will depart the city with either Rastarin or Colfen, and Mórdulin will retain possession of the sword. Displaying the sword before the people on the Day of Memory, Mórdulin will implore both the populace and Calimon to end the violence in Osgiliath. How successful she is will depend on the future actions of characters involved in the city.

TALKING TO MÔRDULIN

As one who has been close to Eldacar before his exile, the Lady Mórdulin was privy to all of the key events of the Kin-strife. She understands the political forces governing Osgiliath and is herself very opinionated about the various factors involved in the present situation. She will not condone violence for any cause, but is clear that her loyalties are with the exiled King and the memory of Ornendil. She, more than anyone else, understands her cousin Neithan and why he chose the path he did, though she knows little of his fate after 1437 except what is common knowledge. Neithan's rumored death is a sore topic with her, and Mórdulin will not easily be persuaded to speak openly of her feelings for her cousin.

TALKING TO ESTEL

Estel knows that Neithan lives and that he has come to the city "to finish what he has started," though the meaning of this she cannot interpret. Estel also knows that Neithan has brought "friends" with him. Again, though, she cannot identify them unless the characters suggest an identity for her to confirm. Such foreknowledge is always incomplete and problematic because Estel is unable to control her perception. If characters seek too much information, she will draw a blank and become incoherent.

TALKING TO RASTARIN

The captain of The Calm before the Storm remains aloof from the affairs of Osgiliath. She nevertheless possesses a wealth of information concerning the activities of Calimon and his lieutenants. As part of the river Guard, Rastarin is sometimes called upon to bear official correspondence from Osgiliath to Pelargir, and she sometimes reads Angbor's secret dispatches. This she does at her own peril—a risk which she enjoys indulging upon occasion. Caramir would have her head for it if he found out, so it is highly unlikely that she will divulge this fact to anyone. Rastarin has thought of selling such information to the rebels for her own profit, but decided that they had nothing to offer her in return.So, she has remained silent.

7.0 MINAS ANOR

Minas Anor is the most populous city in Gondor. It was founded by Anárion as the royal seat of his ward in S.A. 3320 and, since the time of Ostoher, Minas Anor has served as the summer residence of the Kings and the chief citadel of the South-kingdom. Located along the western bank of Anduin, the city's extensive fortifications easily block land movements between Anórien and Lebennin, and therefore played a key role in the outcome of the Kin-strife.

The initial neutrality of Minas Anor's governing council prevented the confederates from attacking Osgiliath on the southwest, but when it finally sided with the rebel forces in 1437, Osgiliath fell. Should the city ever defect to Eldacar, Castamir's own army would be unable to protect Lebennin from the north. Minas Anor has therefore become one of the new King's most important garrisons, and he intends to control it at any cost.

7.1 A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The Great West Road runs straight from the gates of Minas Anor, curving west about a day's march north of the city across the open land between the Anduin and Drúadan forest. Both Osgiliath and Minas Ithil are tied to it by a broad road running northeast of the city, which is bounded on the west by the impassable barrier of Mount Mindolluin and on the east by the Great River; despite the constricting geographical features of the surrounding terrain, however, the river and its adjoining roads connect Minas Anor to the rest of the realm.

7.1.1 THE PELENNOR FIELDS

(POPULATION: 2,000)

The walls of Minas Anor are surrounded by some ninety-six thousand acres of rich farmland and rolling hills, which are used for agriculture and pasturage by the small farmsteads which dot its fields. The Pelennor is crossed by well-maintained roads and tracks, the three major thoroughfares being the Men Aran to Calenardhon, the Men Anduin to Harlond and Pelargir, and the Armal Pelennor to Osgiliath and Minas Ithil. These are cobbled by a broad path and are wide enough for two carts. The trackway is cambered and provided with drains so that it never becomes boggy or rutted. Stone gate-houses guard the road entrances through the Noeg Echor.

The Noeg Echor is a defensive dike which encompasses the Pelennor and is the precursor to Rammas Echor of 2954. The dike runs outside a high earthen bank some twenty-five feet wide at its base and ten feet deep. Its steep sides are battened with logs to prevent erosion and, where it intersects one of the three roads, it is spanned by wooden bridges built on stone piers. The bank itself rises some twelve feet in height; it is capped with a stone-flagged pathway seven feet in width. Its outward side is nearly vertical, while the side facing the Pelennor slopes more gently. Excess water is drained by the Noeg Echor into the Anduin, and much of the land between the dike and the river is consequently marshy and uninhabitable, though rich with flora and fauna.

7.1.2 THE HARLOND

(POPULATION: 500)

Before the Kin-strife, West Osgiliath used to provide the greater part of Minas Anor's harbors, but since the closing of the capital in 1437, the small, fortified suburb of the Harlond (S. South Haven) has come to serve as the city's principal port facility. Located at the northern bank of the bend of the Anduin just outside the Noeg Echor, three miles south of the city, the Harlond is a busy haven with extensive traffic from Gondor's coastal provinces and more distant lands.

Sailors, merchants, and stevedores with their families are the principal inhabitants of the Harlond. It has four great bays cut into the river bank, separated by stone quays, and a fifth harbor further downstream. Visiting craft range from large ocean-going ships to the fishing boats and barges that regularly ply the river. It is a bustling haven with numerous taverns and inns to accommodate travelers, which include most any people of northwestern Middle-earth. The Harlond has a small garrison divided between its two main gatehouses whose task is to maintain law and order. Patrol vessels handle the task of enforcing toll laws and preventing smuggling.

7.1.3 THE SHANTYTOWN

(POPULATION: 10,000-20,000)

Many of the survivors of Osgiliath's ruin came to Minas Anor in order to escape the devastation and oppression of the new regime in the former royal capital. But the sister city was unable to support so great an influx of refugees, and the Conclave was forced to institute regulations that qualify a potential immigrant for permission to settle within the walls. In the interim, the fugitives are expected to live in a hastily erected tent suburb, just north of the Great Gate. Since then, few refugees have passed the stringent requirements of self-sufficiency and proper employment; instead, the majority have transformed the once temporary camp into something more permanent. Their suburb has become Shantytown, a chaotic area with rickety wooden buildings and huts.

The inhabitants call themselves Squirrels, alluding to the fact that they live in wooden dwellings, while most other Gondorians have stone houses. Most subsist as day laborers in the city or nearby farms, relying in part on the charity of the Conclave. If the Shantytown refugees were completely abandoned by the city leaders, they would probably riot and form a lawless rabble. The garrison could quell such an uprising, but only at a terrible and unnecessary cost. Both Ciryang and Borondir are aware of these facts and continue to spend tax money on relief measures for the refugees. The healers have established as small facility there as well.

The Southron cavalry has its barracks just south of Shantytown. This company is despised by the refugees, since it participated in the sack of their former home, and many in their ranks have been recognized by people who once were their victims. There have been some vicious clashes between civilians and mercenaries resulting in several fatalities, but Squirrels who are involved in such disturbances are punished by forcible (and permanent) resettlement to the living nightmare that was once Osgiliath. This threat discourages most potential dissenters from causing their new patrons any inconvenience.

7.1.4 DRÚADAN FOREST

(POPULATION: 400)

A dense forest separates Minas Anor from the rest of Anórien in the northwest. The terrain of this forest is very rough, and outsiders without substantial woodcraft are quickly lost. The resident Drughu (S. Drúedain) whose presence gives the forest its name are elusive and rarely allow themselves to be seen. They have noticed the civil war, but know very little of the men of Gondor (much less the King's name) and continue to live their traditional lives with little regard for the tumultuous events transpiring so close to their home. On the other hand, these Drughu have come to hate the garrison of Minas Anor as a result of several murders committed by the Harondor soldiers (see Section 7.3.2). If the Drughu identify an intruder with their persecutors, Drúadan forest may prove the bane of that unlucky individual. Elves alone may walk beneath the eaves of the woods without fear of reprisal.

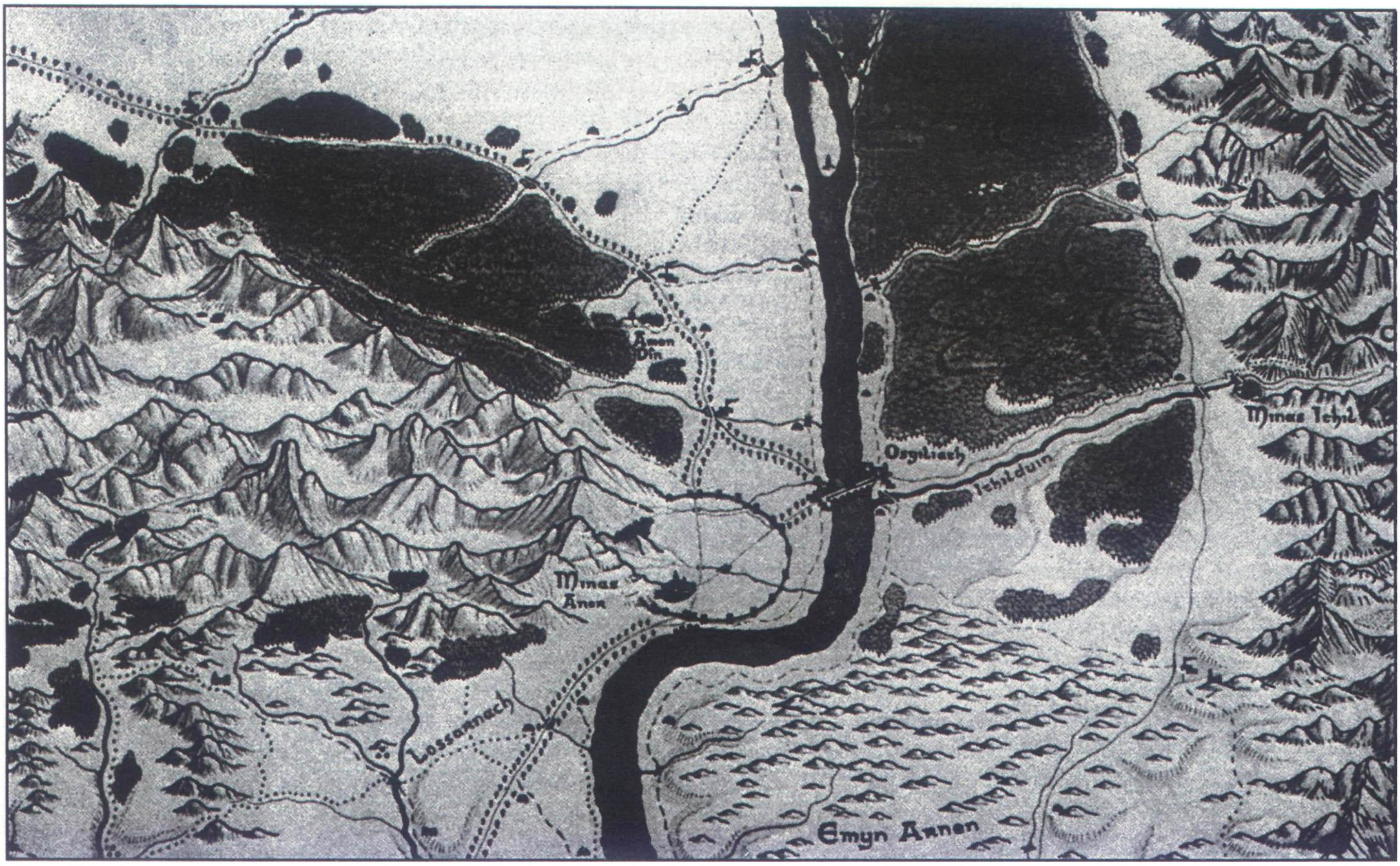
7.1.5 LOSSARNACH

(POPULATION: 12,000)

The mountain vale of Lossarnach touches the Pelennor at its southeastern extremity, beneath the shadow of Mindolluin. This region lies on the frontier between Lebennin and Anórien, and the road to Pelargir runs straight through it, making it of supreme strategic importance to the Usurper. The clansmen of Lossarnach are predominantly of Daen blood, rendering them ill-disposed to Castamir's discriminatory policies. Accordingly, the King has encountered a good deal of resistance from this region and has been forced to populate its lower reaches with heavily armed garrisons in order to protect the road from clan raids.

The Usurper would like to see the Daen nuisance eliminated, but their highly defensible mountain refuges would necessitate a costly, large-scale military expedition likely to entail more losses than gains. Instead, the Usurper chooses to keep this rabble at bay by holding a large group of their relatives hostage in Osgiliath (see Section 6.5.3). Thus far this tact has proven more effective in neutralizing the threat of an all-out Lossarnach rebellion, keeping the otherwise local, unorganized raids to a minimum.

Minas Anor and surroundings

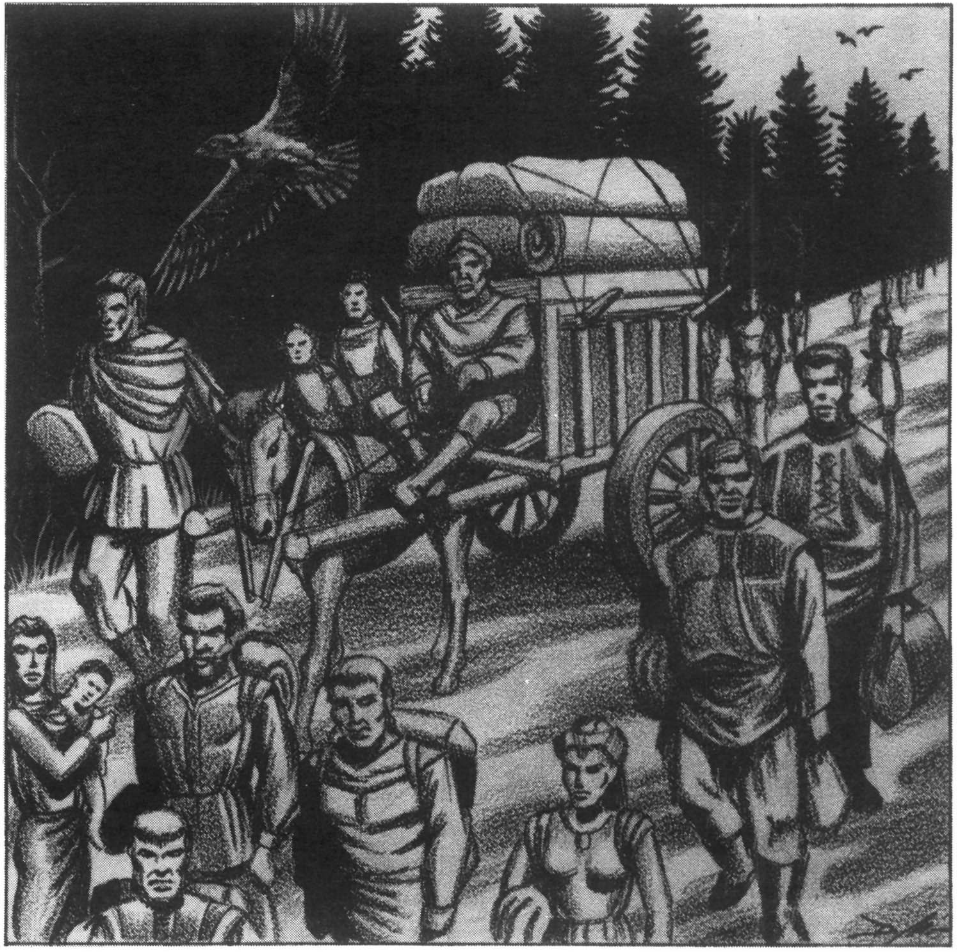


The Daen of Lossarnach are, nevertheless, individually free to journey beyond the confines of their vales and often travel to Minas Anor on market days to trade in dairy products or valuable herbs which grow only in the high mountain valleys. They themselves live off of sheep and goat herding and in some cases limited agriculture.

7.2 THE CITY LAYOUT

Minas Anor was constructed by Anárion in the early years of the realm to guard against the hostile Daen clans of the White Mountains. It grew in importance during the reign of Ostoher, the seventh King, who further fortified it and made it the traditional summer residence of the Kings. It was also important as a fastness for one of the seven palantíri (see Section 2.2.5).

Minas Anor is built upon the easternmost spur of Mount Mindolluin. The city is organized within a series of seven concentric walls, the most central wall encircling an almost unassailable citadel. During the Kin-strife, neither Castamir nor Eldacar ever considered besieging the city, knowing it to be beyond their military resources; instead, they attempted to win over its rulers through diplomacy.



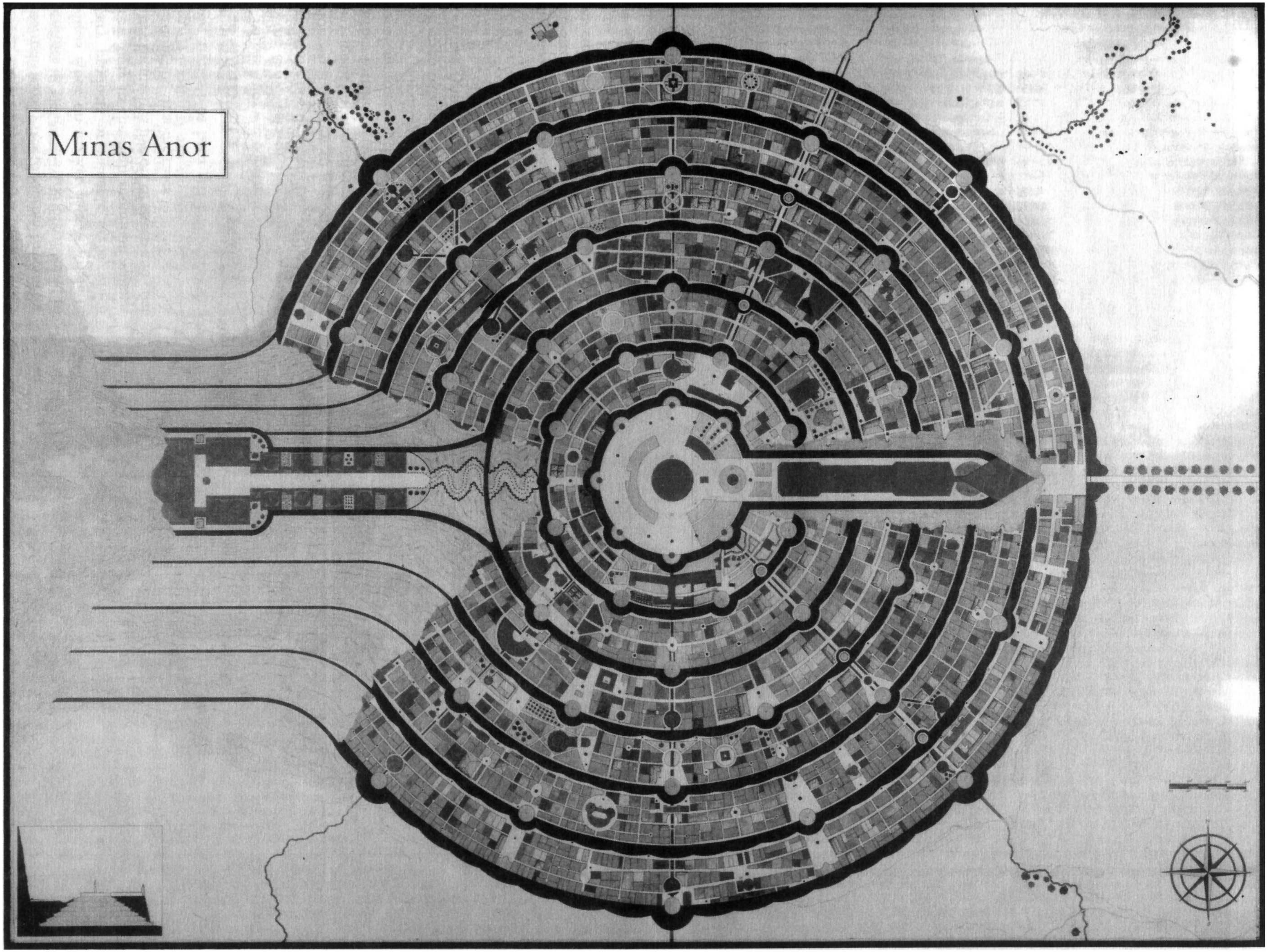
Refugees from Osgiliath

The Outer Wall of Minas Anor is the most formidable in Middle-earth, and it is rumored that only that of the Barad-dûr, before the War of the Last Alliance, has ever surpassed it in strength. The hard and dark surface of the wall rises one hundred feet above the Pelennor; it is thirty feet wide at its top and between forty-five and fifty feet at its base. The outer edge of its parapet is well rounded, providing no hold for grapplin irons. Octagonal towers interrupt this wall at critical points.

The six Inner Walls of the city are built into the steep and rocky hillside of the mountain spur. Each Inner Wall reaches some seventy feet in height and is seven feet wide at its top, which features a walkway and outward-facing battlements. There are eight watch-towers atop the Inner Walls, each of which rises ninety feet and is equipped with a bell to mark the passing of time each hour.

The Great Gate is the sole entrance into the city. It is a massive barbican with a forty-foot wide double gate between two towers. The gate constricts traffic so much that there are ancient regulations forbidding wheeled vehicles drawn by horses and oxen entrance into the city; instead, the city-dwellers use hand-drawn carts for transporting heavy loads. The city has an unusual plan—a single main street winds its way up the hill in a series of well-built tunnels at each level on its way to the Citadel Rock . The street has eleven names for the various levels through which it passes, and numerous lesser streets and alleys branch out from it. The streets are paved with close-fitting stone slabs of high quality, while the alleys are usually only cobbled. Minas Anor has a proper drainage system, carrying away rainwater and detritus. The more important streets are illuminated at night by lamps fueled by tallow.

The citadel of Minas Anor comprises the seventh level of the city and is devoted completely to military, administrative, and ceremonial functions. Its entrance is well-protected by a tunnel ascending from the sixth level. The citadel rock is shaped like a key, and its entry gate opens upon the eastern side of the High Court between the Hall of Isildur and the Place of the Fountain. The court is surrounded by the kitchens, the Hall of Guests, and the Upper Barracks. These colonnaded buildings are, in turn, surrounded by the King's Walk, a circle dotted with grassy lawns and enclosed by the seventh wall. The citadel is controlled by the house of the Kings and those officers they appoint.


Minas Anor

7.2.1 INTERESTING LOCALITIES

The First Level

1. The Great Gate.

2. The Inn By the Gate. See Section 7.6.3.

3. The Old Guesthouse. This reputable housing establishment for travelers is located on the first level of the city and is popular among visiting merchants. Its current owner, Hador, is an informant for the Côr Aran.

The Second Level

4. House Harnastin. Since the execution of the head of its family for treason, the Côr Aran have seized the former residence of House Harnastin as their official headquarters; hence, it is colloquially referred to as "the Crow House." This elegant building is located on the second level of the city and, in addition to serving as Finrod's base of operations, it also houses elements of the city administration. The Côr Aran maintain several other overt or covert installations throughout Minas Anor.

5. Estéliel's Residence. See Section 7.4.4.

The Third Level

6. Goromil's House. See Section 7.8.3.

7. Faramir's Shop. See Section 7.6.3.

The Fourth Level

8. Halls of Learning. This academy is run by the Scribes Fellowship, which offers education for wealthy and titled citizens. At present, the Fellowship accommodates a few hundred students and some twenty scribes—the latter dressed in somber attire and a feather symbolizing their status. The academy has a small but impressive library, which may be used freely by anyone accompanied by a member of the Fellowship. Its halls are situated within two old buildings, connected by a covered walkway.

The Fifth Level

9. The Libraries. Together the Old and New halls of Books hold nearly half a million manuscripts, scrolls, and other artifacts of writing in almost every known language of Middle-earth. The libraries receive their books by donation, by property seized by the Crown, and through the labor of scribes. Many of its tomes are ancient and much effort is devoted to their preservation and restoration. To avoid theft and fire, extensive safety measures are enforced. Windows cannot be opened, and candles are strictly prohibited. The New Hall holds texts dealing with a limited number of subjects: Natural History and Sciences, Arts and Crafts, and the lore of Lesser Races. They are organized according to a system understood only by the scribes. The New Hall received several new documents which had survived the burning of Osgiliath, after these had been salvaged and catalogued in Pelargir (see Section 3.7). The scribes busy themselves with restoring and filing these documents; they are currently discussing a collaborative effort with Angbor, reconstructing the damaged section of the Citadel of Stars in hopes of recovering any other surviving written matter (see Section 6.2.2). The Old Hall is built into the base of the wall of the sixth level. It is an old building, dating to the early years of the city and is constructed in classical Númenórean architectural style.

10. The Fellowships Hall.

The Sixth Level

11. The Houses of Healing. This complex of buildings is surrounded by the only extensive gardens of Minas Anor. It consists of a central ward with several outbuildings, which are able to house as many as three hundred patients. (see Section 7.4.3).

12. Chamber of the Conclave. The meeting hall of the Conclave and the offices of the city administration are located in a tall and imposing building on the sixth level, which is guarded by a company of forty soldiers. The Conclave convenes once a week to decide city matters. Ciryang controls the activities of Anórien's government from here and is always accompanied in this task by a bodyguard.

13. The Lower Barracks. This two-story building houses three hundred line infantry from Lebennin.

The Seventh Level

14. The Place of the Fountain.

15. The Hall of Isildur. This is an ancient granite chamber, erected during Isildur's brief reign. It has no walls, but its pillars surround an open room of understated grandeur. No building in the city is more revered.

16. The Upper Barracks. This three-story building houses six hundred elite line infantry from Pelargir.

17. The High Hall. This is one of the largest buildings in Minas Anor, serving the King and now Ciryang as a personal residence. Curunír also has his lodgings here. The Hall is built from dark stone and has a somber and imposing look.

18. The Tower of Anárion. Built into the pinnacle of the citadel rock, seven hundred feet above the Great Gate, the Tower has traditionally been the residence of the prince and is currently occupied by Coratar. His apartment contains a good library with a collection of ancient maps; the top story houses the Chamber of the Palantír. The key to this room was formerly kept by Coratar, but Ciryang took possession it upon his appointment. Lórin alone is granted regular use of the stone, since Ciryang lacks the necessary skill (see Section 2.2.5).

7.3 CITY AUTHORITIES

Because Anórien is a royal ward of the King, Minas Anor has the same political status as the rural hinterland—though the countryside has little in common with the commercial and military metropolis. When the King summons the rural legates and city leaders to his presence, these groups have little to say to one another. When the King is not holding court in Minas Anor, the city is governed by a legislative body known as the Conclave (see Section 7.3.1).

The Usurper has attempted to further centralize the city administration; he claims that "the necessities of the current political situation" call for more stringent measures, but in reality his motivation is to increase his control over Minas Anor. Because Minas Anor is so valuable to Castamir, he does not dare alienate its population through overly harsh policies, however, as he did with Minas Ithil or Osgiliath.

Minas Anor has a large administrative apparatus responsible to the Conclave, whose primary duty is to ensure that taxes and tolls are collected, that the streets and sewers are maintained at sufficient standards, that law and order are maintained, and that Conclave decisions are enforced. There is a long tradition of strict honesty within the bureaucracy, though Ciryang's arbitrary appointment of many of his Pelargir supporters has undermined ethical standards and caused numerous conflicts among the civil servants. The new men are less dedicated to the city and more interested in lining their own pockets, whereas the old men register their protest against policies they consider to be counterproductive by manipulating the bureaucratic process. It is therefore often difficult to get things done.

7.3.1 THE CONCLAVE

The governing council of Minas Anor is known as the Conclave. It formulates and passes all new city legislation, and is held responsible for the collection of royal tribute. The Conclave is headed by a non-hereditary officer, known as the Prince-president, whose jurisdiction embraces both royal prerogative over Anórien and personal control over matters relating to the city itself. This appointment invests its holder with the power to reject certain council decisions (such as those concerning the city's defense and revisions of the local penal code).

The Conclave has three types of members. Nominees may be appointed for life by the King's representative, typically on the basis of merit or competence. There are up to twelve such members, each of whom receives a yearly pension. Twenty-eight unpaid deputies representing the fellowships make up the second sphere of membership, and, finally, up to ten unpaid advisors may be appointed by the president for a four year term, each of whom represents a family, institution or themselves (such appointments, however, are rare). The Warden of the Keys, who is responsible for the defense of the city, is automatically a member.

Numerically, then, the Conclave is dominated by fellowship representatives; they rarely band together as a unified interest group, however, but are instead divided into numerous factions driven by traditional rivalries. As such, it is often difficult for this segment of the Conclave to form coalitions large enough to pass controversial laws or to establish new policies.

THE CONCLAVE UNDER CASTAMIR

Coratar had been president of the Conclave under Valacar; he has refused to recognize Eldacar as the King's chosen heir, however. Though his policy was to keep Minas Anor out of the civil war, in 1437 he was swayed by the vote of the Conclave to support the confederates. This resolution opened the western bank of Anduin to the rebel forces, which ultimately sealed the fate of Osgiliath.

Upon being named King by the traditionalist confederacy, Castamir restructured the Conclave by removing from office all members who had actively supported his now-exiled opponent. Coratar lost his appointment as the head of the Conclave and Ciryang, an ardent supporter of Castamir from Pelargir, was installed as the new president. Coratar retains only ceremonial privileges in Minas Anor.

Ciryang has substituted the deposed nominees and advisers with new ones, chosen and selected for their pro-Castamir stance. He has also forcibly deposed many of the guild leaders. The resulting Conclave had a traditionalist majority, loyally supportive of Ciryang's policies (though this hardly reflects popular sentiment in the city).

Barahir Harnastin, the former Warden of the Keys under Valacar, was arrested and executed for treason. His successor, Borondir, is an army officer from Lebennin, appointed by Castamir for his military competence and traditionalist views. Borondir is a tough commander and does not tolerate any activities that he perceives to be a threat to city security.

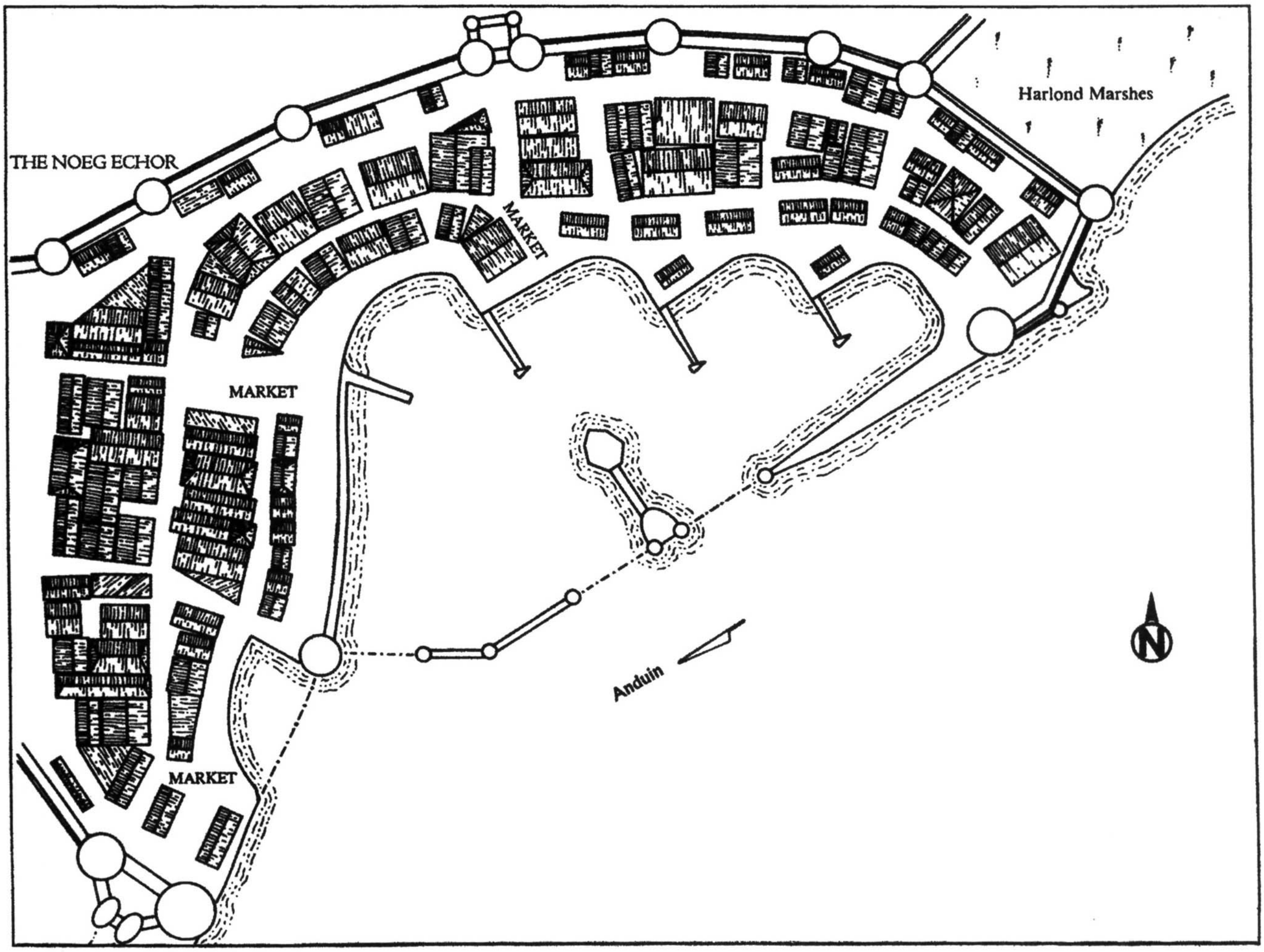
7.3.2 THE GARRISON

(3,000 SOLDIERS)

Troops recruited from Lebennin and Harondor, and mercenaries from the Harad make up the bulk of Minas Anor's current garrison. This is enough to control the city in peacetime and to protect its communication links to the rest of the realm—and the garrison can easily be tripled should Castamir ba faced with an invasion from the North. A typical city patrol consists of four to five men, but as many as twelve may appear where trouble is expected. In the countryside, the Usurper's soldiers always appear in groups of at least twenty.

A force of two thousand line infantry from Lebennin is charged with controlling the city. It is supported by four hundred Haradan archers. Most of this force is housed in the Lower Barracks or in one of the many gate towers of the city. A reconnaissance company of two hundred light infantry from Harondor patrols a twenty mile radius around the city—its main task is to prevent any guerrilla groups from approaching Minas Anor or blocking the road to Pelargir.

Soldiers of this contingent have sometimes slain Drughu while on patrol in Drúadan forest, considering them to be little more than animals. As a consequence, these soldiers have come to fear Drughu ambushes, well-known for their fatal tricks and traps. Both groups are skilled woodsmen, but since the Drughu fight on their home ground they have a significant advantage. Few among the garrison now willingly venture inside the forest.



A mounted company of four hundred Haradrim is based in newly built barracks and stables located outside the Great Gate, since it is easier to take proper care of the horses there. This company patrols the area between Drúadan forest and the Anduin as far as Cair Andros in order to safeguard the Great Western Road and the Osgiliath Road.

One of their tasks is to hunt down infiltrators from Rhovanion, but their principal adversaries are Ithilien guerrilla fighters, who sneak across the Anduin on reconnaissance missions. The clashes between these guerrillas and the Southrons are vicious, since neither side bothers much with taking prisoners, except for the purpose of acquiring intelligence through brutal interrogation.

The cavalry are also hated by the farmers along the Anduin for their contempt of civilians. There have been many cases of theft, robbery, and molestation of girls. The Southron soldiers are also despised in Minas Anor, and there are frequent (and occasionally fatal) tavern brawls even between companies of the garrison.

The Haradan officers are nominally present in Gondor as a political arrangement between Pelargir and their own Kings, but in practice most view service in Minas Anor as a means of personal aggrandizement and hold no particular ideological commitments to the Usurper.

7.3.3 THE CÔR ARAN

Several Côr Aran cells monitor the leaders, fellowships, and clandestine organizations of Minas Anor. Caramir appointed Finrod to coordinate these activities in 1439, but kept watch on him through his own eyes and ears within the city. Finrod, being an equally suspicious leader, does not inform his subordinates of the whole range of their activities in the city; instead, he distributes information on a "need to know" basis (with himself being the sole judge of such needs).

Finrod's organization is therefore permeated by fear, obsessive secrecy, and scheming, often hampering its official job of surveillance in the city. Necessary information does not always reach those cell leaders who might profit from it, so that one cell may actually end up working against another cell without knowing it (by monitoring, for example, the activities of another cell that is posing as a loyalist organization, without being informed of the deception).

In certain instances, Crows have killed one another due simply to lack of coordination. The morale of the Minas Anor Crows is naturally affected by these counterproductive policies, producing bad feeling within the organization about the many botched missions and stupid mistakes caused by Finrod's behavior. The common Crow has little faith either in his chief or fellow workers.

7.3.4 THE COUNCIL OF GONDOR

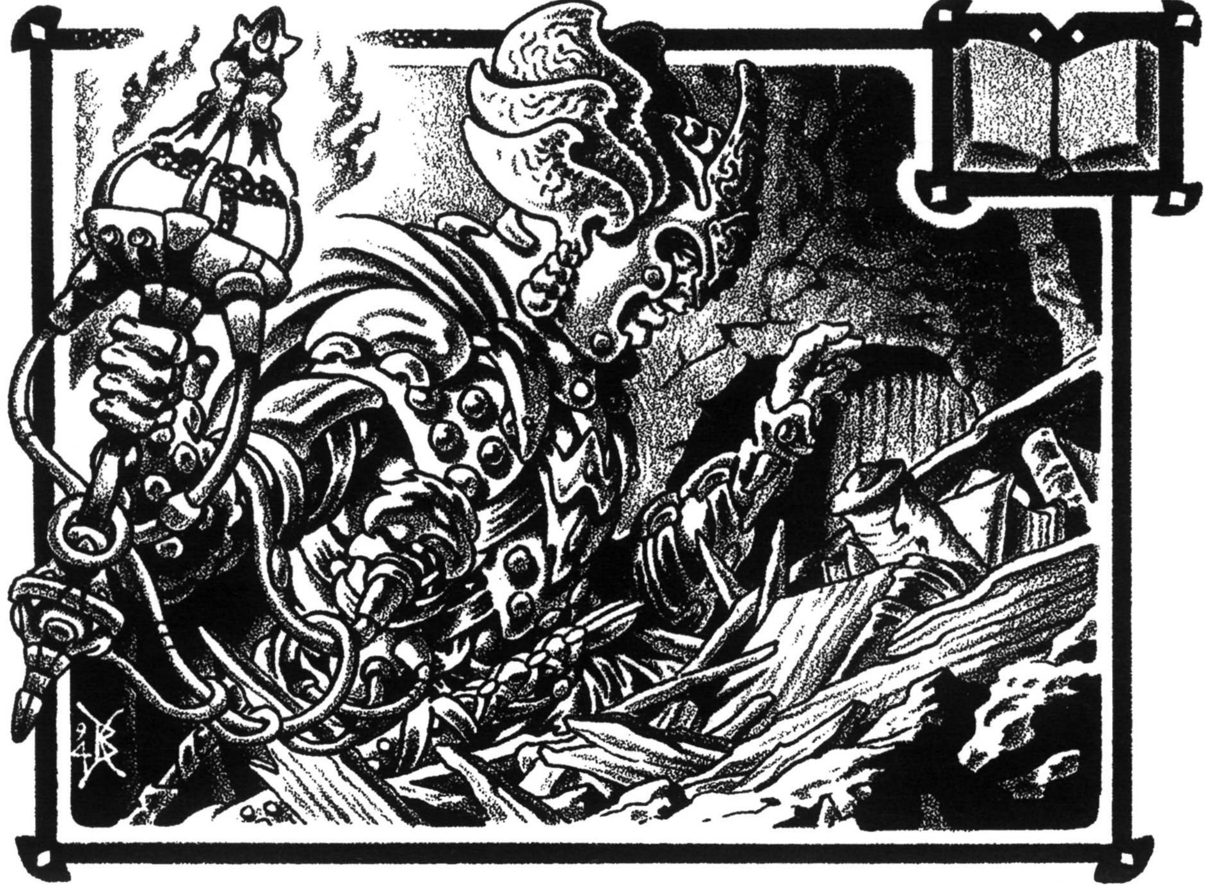
Apart from its regular governing institutions, Minas Anor is also host city to an annual convocation of the rulers of the realm known as the Council of Gondor. Since the days of Ostoher, it has been customary for the King to hold court in Minas Anor during the summer months. Over the years, this tradition has grown to become a permanent institution, though its constituency changes according to need and it retains an ad hoc character.

The most powerful and prominent men (and not a few women) of the South-kingdom—princes, lords, governors, judges, or wealthy landowners—all attend the Council of Gondor. On occasion, foreign emissaries are also invited to attend; these, however, are not allowed to participate directly in its decision-making process and may only be involved in an advisory or informative capacity. The membership of the Crown Council (see Section 2.2.4) is subsumed within the Council of Gondor when it is in session.

The council is nominally led by the King (who, of course, gets the final word in any debate), but he will often choose to delegate the details of this task to a trusted officer or respected family member (e.g., Castamir always defers to his uncle Morlaen in these situations.). Participation in the council is through invitation or precedent alone.

The Council of Gondor has three functions, the first two of which are carried out in conjunction with the Crown Council: 1) to adjudicate important cases where the law is unclear; 2) to act as a court of appeals; and 3) to advise the King on matters of national scope or enduring consequence. The political role played by Minas Anor in the Kin-strife and its aftermath has embued the council with a newfound significance since, with the Usurper's withdrawal to Pelargir, the council's meeting has become the only opportunity for many leaders of northern Gondor to have contact with their King.

During the Usurper's stay in Minas Anor, the city garrison swells to three times its normal size. Because of his continuing responsibilities as Captain of Ships, Castamir declines to remain in Anórien for the entire summer, preferring to visit the city for no longer than a month's time, beginning on Loëndë (the day before the official convocation of the council). Queen Mûrabêth usually accompanies him, but his sons always remain in Pelargir to manage affairs in their father's absence.



Opening crates full of books

Because Anórien is a royal ward, Castamir has the right to participate in any of the city's administrative processes (e.g., presiding over the Conclave). Such an event, however, depends on the King's mood and the contingencies of the situation. It is a common practice for rival groups or individuals in Minas Anor to defer resolution of their differences until the King's arrival, at which point there ensues intense competition to win royal favor by showering the King with gifts. The extent of this practice makes it impractical (if not impossible) for the King to personally answer all requests; consequently, Castamir has delegated several trusted friends and relatives to handle the arbitration of such informal disputes.

7.4 THE INHABITANTS

(POPULATION: 55,000)

Before the Kin-strife, fifty-five thousand inhabitants lived within the walls of Minas Anor; following the siege and burning of Osgiliath, however, a large number of refugees settled in the shantytown outside the wall and increased the population to between sixty-five and seventy-five thousand. As a result, Minas Anor is the largest city in northwestern Middle-earth, although its administration has been unable to determine the exact size of its population due to the chaos of the civil war.

7.4.1 THE ELITE

The distinct mercantile atmosphere of Minas Anor has discouraged the formation of an hereditary nobility, but most of the houses that do reside in the city (e.g., the Dunmardo, Usulúni, and Astirian) are ancient indeed, tracing their lineage to the companions of Elendil and his sons who fled to Middle-earth from Númenor. These nobles rarely involve themselves in city politics, a trait that has been even more pronounced during the Usurper's reign, despite Castamir's attempts to form alliances with them. Most have realized that the only way of preserving their reputation is to stay free of the current political morass.

7.4.2 THE FELLOWSHIPS

The production of crafts in Minas Anor is dominated by twenty-eight fellowships, which have traditionally played an important political role in the Conclave. Castamir and Ciryang have attempted (with some success) to manipulate these associations to their advantage, and the newly formed Conclave has a majority of leaders who support the King, though without real enthusiasm.

These leaders believe that Castamir's rule is currently the only guarantee of domestic stability, despite the disruption of trade during the interim of the civil war, when the lower Anduin valley was ravaged by battles. The damage to the city's economy during the fighting was a major motivation behind the Conclave's resolution to support the superior strength of the confederates. The guilds have done their best to persuade Castamir to adopt policies that are beneficial for trade, but it has quickly become apparent that the Usurper cares little for the land and thinks only of his fleets; he seaward preoccupation has left Minas Anor (and the majority of northern Gondor) in an economic slump that shows little sign of recovery.

7.4.3 THE HEALERS

Minas Anor is renowned for its healers; they occupy an extensive complex at the southern side of the sixth level which possesses the only herb gardens within the city walls. The Houses of Healing are governed by Malbeth of Lossarnach, a Dúnadan of pure lineage whose family has traditionally occupied the role of Warden of the Houses. The healers of Minas Anor always dress in white robes, so as to be easily recognizable. They supply advice and help to anyone in need and often venture down into the city and its neighboring communities in order to visit those too ill to make the journey. The toll of the Usurper's reign has heightened the demand for healers here and elsewhere in Gondor.

7.4.4 THE CITIZENS

The common folk of Minas Anor are for the most part laborers and apprentices who earn meager wages through menial jobs. They have suffered from the war, and though the city has been spared a siege, they are poorer now than they were ten years ago, and many are unemployed. The populace is gradually growing more and more discontented with the rule of Pelargir, but there is little they can do without organization or effective leadership. They revere Coratar as a symbol of their former prosperity, but he carefully maintains a non-political facade. The commoners especially hate the Southron mercenaries, who respond to this anger with weapons. There have been some vicious clashes between laborers and Southrons at guesthouses on the first level of the city, resulting in several deaths.

7.4.5 NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

PRESIDENT CIRYANG (1393-1447†)

Born the second son of a minor noble family from Lebennin, Ciryang has been competent, ruthless, and ambitious from an early age; he has demonstrated complete loyalty to the Captain of Ships through the exercise of his administrative appointment in Pelargir during the 1420's. He devoted all of his energies to the traditionalist confederacy, and mobilized the resources of the haven for war when the rebellion broke out; these labors were rewarded in 1437 by his appointment to Minas Anor.

Ciryang avoids the methods used by Heruvorn and Calimon to govern their cities, preferring instead to work within the framework of Minas Anor's traditional arrangements, always following the correct procedures when establishing new policies and regulations; in substance, however, Ciryang's rule is despotic, given the traditionalist majority of the Conclave.

Ciryang is aware of the city's nearly impregnable defenses and knows that he must maintain control of them at all costs. Among the populace, Ciryang's administration compares unfavorably with Coratar's, but revolt is effectively deterred by the presence of a garrison wholly loyal to the Usurper. Nevertheless, should a rebellion successfully oust the garrison and seize the Great Gate, months or even years might pass before Castamir could re-establish his control over the city.

Ciryang's residence and office are situated in the High Hall on the seventh level of the city. He has another office in the Chamber of the Conclave. Aa bodyguard of elite soldiers from Pelargir accompanies him at all times. He is a stern and impenetrable person who rarely underestimates anyone; Coratar, alone, he misjudges to be a harmless, old man.

Ciryang has a stony expression, a level voice, and cold green eyes. His brown hair is thinning and his belly shows a paunch, though it is hidden under his clothes; these are expensive and meant to display his position as one of the senior officials of the realm.

Commander Borondir (1402-1447†)

The Othir of Minas Anor's garrison is a staunch traditionalist from Lebennin with a lengthy military career. Borondir joined the confederacy on the eve of the rebellion, earning important commands as a result of competence displayed in the Emyn Arnen campaign of 1433-1436 and finally receiving appointment to Minas Anor in 1439. Borondir's abilities as a captain have ensured a high level of efficiency and morale within the garrison, though his disdain for lesser races makes cooperation with Culcamalin problematic.

Borondir looks every bit the model of a Dúnadan officer—tall, upright, commanding, and confident in his bearing. He proudly wears his family's coat of arms at all times and never appears in public in less than full uniform.

Prince Coratar (1365-1596)

King Valacar appointed his cousin to preside over the Conclave of Minas Anor in 1401, and Coratar showed himself to be both competent and well-liked by the people; in the end, however, he broke troth with the King's will by refusing to support his chosen heir. As resistance to Valacar grew in the southern provinces, Coratar found himself likewise opposed to active alliance with the confederates, seeking a path of neutrality and non-involvement until the victory of one side or the other became immanent.

Because of Coratar's eventual support for the traditionalist confederacy, the Usurper could not summarily depose him without risking widespread disapproval from both the populace and his coalition. But Coratar's equivocal behavior during the Kin-strife made it plain to Castamir that effective rule of Minas Anor demanded some kind of compromise with the existing power arrangements. Accordingly, the King divided royal jurisdiction in the city between the presiding officer of the Conclave (to be newly appointed by himself) and the ceremonial functions of the previous incumbent.

Coratar has assumed the role of the city's "elder statesman," offering the newer members of the Conclave unsolicited advice concerning the governance of the city. This ineffectual patronizing has given him an aura of harmlessness, and for that reason nobody of importance pays heed to him. Coratar is secretly a loyalist, and his behavior is a facade intended to conceal his leadership of Lasgalen (see Section 7.5.2).

Coratar looks twenty years younger than his actual age due to his royal lineage—he is one of the nephews of Rómendacil II. His hair has turned grey and his head is balding. His blue eyes can shift between sternness and laughter in a fleeting moment. Coratar gets along well with almost everyone, easily adjusting his speech and behavior to his surroundings. When he walks the streets of the city, he is greeted by admiring commoners, who remember his benevolent rule before the Kin-strife. He continues to reside in the Tower of Anárion, from which he performs all of his ceremonial duties conscientiously.

Finrod (1369-1441†)

Finrod is the chief of the Côr Aran in Minas Anor. In origin a nobleman from Pelargir who worked his way through the haven's administration during the 1430's, Finrod managed to join the Côr Aran at its founding late in 1438. He won Caramir's confidence and his current position through clever politicking.

The appointment to Minas Anor has proven beyond his skill, and Finrod realizes that he is gradually losing control of the situation. He maintains control through a policy of deliberate divisiveness, while projecting a facade of efficiency and organizational harmony for the benefit of his superiors. In reality, Finrod is a lonely and frightened man, who is gradually becoming wary of his own men.

Finrod is afraid that many of his subordinates are ruthless and ambitious enough to supplant him. He limits their power by controlling their access to information, and his maneuvering has rendered his subordinates unable to petition for his removal. Caramir knows something of the troublesome situation through his private spies, but has not yet found a satisfactory solution. He must get rid of Finrod without exposing himself—after all, the King might perceive such preemptory action as an act of rebellion against him.

Finrod is a short and stocky man with black hair and blue eyes. His quiet behavior leads others to underestimate his ruthlessness and intelligence, which is still significant, however unstable his sanity is becoming.

Malbeth (1264-1449)

Malbeth of Lossarnach is the aging head of the healers of Gondor, now based in Minas Anor (see Section 7.4.3). His family came to Middle-earth with Isildur and Anárion and was already a venerable line of healers in Númenor before Akallabêth. Their fame derives from a special association with the Vala Estë (much like Uinen's covenant with the line of Edhelion), the origin of which is lost in the mists of First Age Beleriand. This grace enables Malbeth and his family to perform healings of nearly Elven potency and their reputation attracts many invalids from beyond the bounds of the South-kingdom.

While retaining his great skill, Malbeth's vigor has declined significantly over the last twenty years and particularly since the outbreak of the war. He has surrendered the responsibility of governing the Houses of Healing to the Lady Mórdulin, whom he apprenticed during the siege of Osgiliath; his own daughter Terieth oversees the new Healer's Hall in the guarded city. The outbreak of violence in Lossarnach since the end of the Kin-strife has prevented Malbeth from visiting his homeland, keeping him confined to Minas Anor for the most part. He hates the Usurper for obvious reasons, but realizes himself to be powerless to play any role in opposing his rule.

Malbeth is fragile in body and bent with age; he requires a staff to aid him in walking. He wears the ordinary white robes of the healers, but his high rank is signaled by a mithril circlet with a sapphire-blue stone that graces his greying wisps of hair.

Lórin (1406-1653)

Lórin is the royal seer of Minas Anor and the keeper of the Palantír (see Section 2.2.5). He is one of the two sons of Edrahil, brother to Prince Adrazôr of Belfalas. As his father before him, Lórin is distinguished within the line of Edhelion as the chosen bearer of the Grace of Uinen, the Truesight of Númenor (see Section 5.4.1). This gift enhances his ability to use the Anor-stone, making him indispensable to the Usurper despite the tensions that exist between their two houses.

Although as yet unconnected to any loyalist group in Minas Anor, Lórin is vehemently opposed to Castamir (though his office prevents him from expressing this openly). He shares these sentiments with both his father and brother, who act as wardens of the Orthanc and Ithil-stones respectively. Close surveillance on the part of Castamir's own appointed wardens constrains them from using the powers of the stones against the Usurper, but that may change if either Lórin or his relatives make contact with any loyalists in their cities.

Lórin is very close to his cousin Mórdulin, and they often spend time together when their duties do not call them away. He is also friends with Coratar, though the latter has not yet revealed his loyalist sympathies (for Lórin's own protection). Nevertheless, the former president gleans valuable information from the seer, which is quickly put to use planning the activities of Lasgalen.

Lórin is tall and slight of figure, but well-muscled due to the intensive physical regime with which he disciplines himself. His somewhat wild black mane of hair contrasts with the purity of his luminescent blue eyes. He always wears the black robes of his office, which flash with a brilliant silver trim.

Lady Mórdulin (1406-1641)

Mórdulin is one of the two daughters of Prince Adrazôr of Belfalas (Her sister Lóthriel is wife and princess to the Usurper's son Castaher; see Section 2.2.1.). She was betrothed (but not wed) to Eldacar's eldest son Ornendil before the outbreak of the Kin-strife and has spent half of her life in Osgiliath. She was captured during the siege of that city by her cousin Orodreth (Neithan) and was forced to witness the murder of her beloved at Castamir's orders in 1437. Since then, Mórdulin has taken the vows of a healer and has dwelt in Minas Anor under the protection of Malbeth.

For many in the North—and not least for the former citizens of Osgiliath—the Lady Mórdulin has become a symbol of their grievances against the Usurper. Ornendil was greatly loved by the people of Minas Anor and Ithilien, and Mórdulin, his once-betrothed, is now the focus of that adoration. The nearly sacred aura with which Mórdulin has been invested by the people is as much political as it is emotional, and Castamir has been wise to treat her with the greatest caution.

The families of those who were slaughtered in Osgiliath in 1437 have appointed Mórdulin to lead the memorial gathering for the slain, which is held every year before the Dome of Stars on the anniversary of the massacre. Castamir rightly realizes the potential threat the lady could pose to his rule in this capacity and has decreed that she be confined within the walls of Minas Anor during the rest of the year. Her state of house arrest has not, however, completely removed her from public life.

In the hearts of the citizens of Minas Anor, Mórdulin is second only to Coratar. She has taken an active role in the Houses of Healing and has assumed the Terieth's duties in her absence. Mórdulin is cousin to Lórin, royal seer and chief warden of the Palantír of Minas Anor, and their kinship has brought her into regular contact with the notables of the city. The lady has not let these opportunities lie idle.

No one has felt the anguish and loss of the Kin-strife more painfully than Mórdulin. In the court of Osgiliath, she witnessed King Valacar's desperate struggle to hold the realm of Anárion together. She watched helplessly as the confederates brought bloody reprisal against the people of the capital and wept as they turned her own kinsmen against each other, to Ornendil's death.

Haleth

Although bitter towards the Usurper, Mórdulin has been placed in a position of powerlessness, and harbors no hopes of vengeance—unless Eldacar should return. In the interim, she has resolved to devote herself to healing the hurts of others who suffer from the oppression of Castamir. In this calling, Mórdulin has eschewed recourse to violence, believing that under such tyranny, any and all attempts to fight will only bring about greater hurt. In her refusal to fight Castamir with his own weapons, she has not, however, resigned herself to the Usurper's rule (see Section 7.5.2).

Mórdulin is still quite young in the reckoning of her people, but her sea-grey eyes have seen much to make her appear older and even world-weary to some. Like her sister, she is thought to be exceedingly fair, but has little cause for joy or laughter. As long as the Usurper lives, she considers herself to be in mourning and will wear the black garments of that state. Her unobtrusive and quiet bearing in public contrasts with the greate awe and respect the people feel for her.

CURUNÍR

Curunír has been investigating the archives and libraries of Minas Anor since 1438 and resides in the High Hall of the citadel rock. He was appalled by the damage sustained by Osgiliath as a result of its siege and burning at the Usurper's orders, but is a skilled enough diplomat to have won the confidence of both Castamir and Ciryang.

The White Wizard spends much of his time among the archive shelves, primarily attempting to determine the content of their oldest documents. He is by now acquainted with most of the staff, but his stern manners keep them at a distance from him. None inquire as to the nature of his investigations, though there are a good deal of speculation in the air.

Curunír appears as an old man clad in white robes. He always carries his wooden staff with him wherever he goes, though his vigorous bearing does not suggest he needs a crutch. The wizard's commanding voice is able to lull even the most adversarial person into a state of humility. (See Section 2.2.8 for more information.)

ESTÉLIEL (1417-1441†)

Estéliel is the daughter of Barahir, the former Warden of the Keys who was executed by Castamir upon his ascension (see Section 7.3.1). Estéliel chose to remain in Minas Anor in order to protect her relatives, whose property had been confiscated by the Usurper's orders. She has rented some rooms in a house on the second level, living off the remains of her family's fortune.

Estéliel's hatred for the Usurper has driven her to madness, twisting her perceptions of those around her into perverse caricatures of good and evil—any who do not share in her convictions and aspirations are regarded as potential enemies, liable for extermination should she deem it necessary. Characters may encounter Esteliel in several ways—nobles may meet her at a reception, while commoners may be approached when she is seeking accomplices for some wild scheme.

Estéliel is a small woman with a somber face and long brown hair, but is far more lethal than most would be led to believe by her appearance. On the surface, Estéliel has all the appearance of a young Dúnadan noblewoman, albeit one that has fallen on hard times; but beneath this veneer is a highly unstable personality given to eccentric mannerisms—she may be oblivious to those around her, stare blankly, and speak in an emotionless voice. Her flowing hair is usually veiled by a black scarf.

HALETH (1412-1489)

Haleth is the unofficial leader of the Squirrels. She was born in Osgiliath as the only child of a wealthy merchant. Her father educated her in the skills necessary for running a business (for which she showed great talent); but her parents were slaughtered before the Dome of Stars in 1437, and their home, office, and warehouses were plundered and put to the torch. Haleth survived by killing a soldier who attempted to rape her and managed to escape the burning city, joining the stream of refugees that fled to Minas Anor.

Haleth's only choice was to settle in Minas Anor's shantytown because the Conclave would not admit any more refugees. Seeing that this settlement needed leadership, she began applying her organizing and negotiating skills to establish cooperation and a set of common rules among the refugees. Haleth won the respect of the Squirrels, and within a few months she had become universally recognized as their spokesperson.

As their advocate, Haleth spends a great deal of her time petitioning the Conclave to improve the sad lot of the refugees. Her position is controversial only among those refugees whose illicit activities Haleth's leadership hinders, but even these would not dare to remove her, since they know that the Squirrels would seek vengeance.

Haleth is a proud woman, and carries herself with a dignity that belies the abject poverty in which she lives. Her dark hair and distinguished features mark her Dúnadan ancestry, but the signs of her wealthy upbringing are gone from her emaciated face. She wears worn and tattered garments, refusing to don finer attire until all of her people are adequately clothed.

CAPTAIN CULCAMALIN (1409-1441†)

Culcamalin is the captain of the Southron cavalry stationed outside the walls of Minas Anor. Culcamalin first offered his services to the confederates in 1435, when they suffered from a shortage of cavalry. During the following year, the young warlord from Near Harad saw action in the Emyn Arnen, and his company soon gained a reputation for exceptional ruthlessness.

The unit participated in the sack of Osgiliath, on which occasion its members enthusiastically enriched themselves through wholesale plunder. Culcamalin was appointed to Minas Anor in 1439 with the task of safeguarding the roads to Pelargir, Osgiliath, and Anórien.

Culcamalin participates in the Kin-strife primarily for material gain and has made himself quite wealthy as a result. Although self-centered and unscrupulous, he is a clever man who is rarely deceived into acting against his own interests. He will never cooperate with loyalists, except to betray them to the Crows for money.

The Côr Aran has its eyes of Culcamalin, having some knowledge of his corrupt dealings; because the Southron has occasionally helped them to catch loyalists, though, Finrod has decided to let him continue his "businesses," assured that the Côr Aran possesses enough incriminating information to send him to the gallows should he step too far out of line.

Culcamalin wears the full panoply of a Southron warlord and is rarely seen in public without his armor and weapons. Culcamalin bears the device of the Southron confederacy, emblazoned in gold upon his crimson surcoat. His tattooed face and ritually pierced ears make him an outlandish sight to behold in the heartland of Gondor.

7.5 CLANDESTINE GROUPS

7.5.1 ORGANIZED CRIME

Several well-organized gangs populate Minas Anor and its environs—they generally engage in diverse activities that keep them from coming into conflict with one another; occasionally, however, the lower levels of the city or the Shantytown are subject to bloody turf wars. The Côr Aran spend much of their time monitoring these gangs, since Finrod rightfully considers them to be a potential threat to law and order. Members of several gangs have been coerced into providing the Crows with information. Occasionally, the Côr Aran will succeed in crushing a gang and sending its members to the gallows. Such successes are exploited by Ciryang for propaganda purposes. The following entries describe prominent criminal organizations in Minas Anor.

THE ROGUES FELLOWSHIP

This group concentrates on theft, fencing, and smuggling and is the largest of the gangs. It is led by seemingly reputable individuals from prominent families who use their businesses as covers for their illicit activities.

THE CATS

The Cats are a small but feared group of extremely efficient burglars, who like to rob the houses of the wealthy of their jewelry and other lightweight valuables. The respected Jeweler, Imrahil, leads the Cats, while other members have similar, though less prominent, covers.

THE SHARKS

The Sharks are smugglers, thieves, and pimps who claim the Harlond as their territory. For the most part, they prey on drunken sailors and naive visitors.

THE RIVER RATS

The River Rats are a small but vicious gang from Osgiliath, whose members reside in the Shantytown and earn their living by extorting protection money from the Squirrels, or through petty theft and smuggling. The River Rats are generally despised by gangs native to Minas Anor, especially the Sharks.

THE STRAIGHT MAN

The Straight Man of Pelargir has recently turned his attention upriver. When Osgiliath fell, he immediately realized the importance Minas Anor would acquire, and over the last few years he has gathered information on its criminal organizations. The Straight Man's four henchmen in Minas Anor have been ordered to crack some skulls among the local smugglers in order to evaluate the true extent and influence of the Rogues Fellowship. The Straight Man is of the opinion that he can enter the business as soon as he knows the strength of his competitors. The way things look, he could control a small smuggling ring in Minas Anor before the end of the year. (See Section 3.5.2 for more information.)

7.5.2 THE LOYALIST RESISTANCE

Resistance to the Usurper is strong in Minas Anor, and many loyalist groups have emerged to express and give resolve to this sentiment. The success of these groups has been facilitated by the fact that the size of the city permits extensive activity without immediate detection. Three resistance groups predominate Minas Anor.

LASGALEN

Lasgalen is small but its members belong to the upper social strata. Its principal aim is to provide Eldacar with information concerning the Usurper's military presence in Anórien and Ithilien. Lasgalen also has a way of smuggling political refugees and deserters north to the safety of Calenardhon or Rhovanion. Coratar is the leader of this group and has thus far managed to avoid discovery by the Côr Aran.

NIMLOTH

Nimloth is named after the White Tree of Minas Anor. This group of healers under the leadership of the Lady Mórdulin opposes the Usurper's reign because of its violence. Its members seek to assist those on the run from Ciryang's tyranny by smuggling them out of the city. The Houses of Healing have a venerable status in Minas Anor, and not even the garrison soldiers are prepared to interfere with a healer who claims to be carrying out his or her office. Finrod has recently gained some information on Nimloth and has organized a cell to uncover its activities. Coratar knows about Nimloth, though the healers have no knowledge of his covert activities.

THE BUNCH

This gang of porters, laborers, and street-vendors have banded together as vigilantes dedicated to expelling Haradrim from the city walls by assaulting and beating them after dark. The Southrons have learned to visit the city in large and well-armed groups.

ESTÉLIEL

The daughter of Barahir hopes one day to avenge herself upon the Usurper and actively conspires against Ciryang and his regime by attempting to establish resistance groups, but without success. Estéliel is monitored by the Côr Aran, but has thus far managed to hide her true intentions behind a placid front. Given the current lack of coordination among Finrod's men, no action is likely to be taken against her, unless one of her plots should succeed.

Estéliel's familiarity with many of the elite in Minas Anor gives her a reasonably informed understanding of the Ciryang's regime, though much of this is unconsciously distorted to fit her unstable view of the world. Consorting with Estéliel is fraught with danger. Collaboration may draw the vigilance of the Côr Aran, while conscious avoidance will certainly render one a potential enemy.

THE CABAL

The Cabal is the only loyalist group in Minas Anor which has direct contact with Eldacar's agents at the moment. Its eighteen members are led by the cloth merchant, Amlaith, and its principal function is information-gathering. Coratar knows of the Cabal through an informant (see Section 7.6.2), but is not yet prepared to entrust Amlaith with the existence of Lasgalen.

7.5.3 SERVANTS OF THE ENEMY

The Necromancer obtains news of the activities of the Conclave by means of spies fronting a fictitious loyalist organization known as the Forgil. By 1439, these agents from Dol Guldur had established a single contact in the city, who regularly informs them of any new developments within the Conclave under Ciryang. This contact is Aegnor, a loremaster from the Rynd Thannath who believes that he is acting on behalf of Eldacar. He has been directed to avoid other loyalists in the city, on the justification that they may be infiltrated by the Côr Aran. Aegnor resides in a house on the fourth level of the city, near to Rynd Thannath.

7.6 ADVENTURE: LOYAL TO WHOM?

Secrecy is a double-edged sword, and in the spy-ridden capital of Anórien it can easily turn to one's own undoing. Too much secrecy can sometimes prove more dangerous than too little, especially when it distorts the one's view of true allies. Within the loyalist Cabal of Minas Anor, "loyalty" is a slippery concept indeed!

7.6.1 A TALE OF LOYALISTS AND "LOYALISTS"

Nimloth and Lasgalen, the principal loyalist organizations in Minas Anor, have sprung up only recently; although Eldacar, far away in Rhovanion, is aware of their existence, he has as yet been unwilling (or unable) to make direct contact with either. The exiled King has other eyes and ears in the city—an ultra-secretive "cabal" came into existence around the year 1439, when one of his own spies established an information-gathering network with a local cloth merchant named Amlaith.

Eldacar's spy, Irdamir of Calenardhon, had been an old trading partner of Amlaith's for some time and was aware of the cloth merchant's loyalist stance toward the Usurper. Irdamir was not disappointed when he approached his business associate with the opportunity to put his political ideals into practice. Amlaith found willing recruits to aid him, and soon had a burgeoning intelligence network underway. Irdamir received his reports on conditions in Minas Anor and concealed them in his cargo bound for Calenardhon and Rhovanion.

It was not long, however, before the powerful of the city began to take notice of the cloth merchant's success. Despite Amlaith's great caution in concealing the meetings and identities of the Cabal members, his organization was soon compromised. However, due to his overly successful internal secrecy, neither Amlaith nor the infiltrators have fully realized what the Cabal has become.

Even the Usurper himself would laugh at the supreme irony of this clandestine morass, could he but see it, for nearly every one of his trusted servants in Minas Anor—Ciryang, Borondir, Finrod—has successfully infiltrated the Cabal without the slightest idea that their fellow traditionalists have also done so. Nor are any of the separate loyalist or neutral parties involved in the activities of the Cabal aware of this situation.

This comedy of errors began when the Côr Aran captured Voronwë, one of Amlaith's first recruits. The Harlond warehouse owner-turned-loyalist quickly broke down under Finrod's interrogations and revealed everything he knew (which, fortunately for him, was not everything there was to know). Finrod spared his life on two conditions: that he act as an informant and that he assist in the infiltration of Amlaith's group by one of Finrod's own agents, Ciryon.

Had Finrod been wiser, he would have told all of his cell leaders about the Cabal's existence and his couterplans, but the paranoid Finrod decided to keep quiet lest his subordinates acquire too much information about his operations in Minas Anor. As a result, the Cabal has been now been infiltrated by four separate Côr Aran cells, all of them oblivious to each other's presence. Should news of this ridiculous state of affairs reach Caramir in Pelargir, Finrod would pay.

The drama does not end here—Ciryang and Borondir each have their own informants in the Cabal, as do Coratar and Estéliel. So too have Culcamalin and the Straight Man of Pelargir bought-off ears inside of Amlaith's "loyalist" organization. The only person with a shred of doubt about the integrity of the group is Irdamir of Calenardhon, who has not failed to notice the marked decline in the quality of intelligence produced by the Cabal. A brief investigation into rumors from the Pelargir nest have confirmed Irdamir's suspicions that something may be terribly wrong. He has resolved to determine the extent to which the Cabal has been compromised and to act accordingly.

7.6.2 THE NPCS

IRDAMIR (1383-1501)

Irdamir is a Calenardhon-based merchant from Calmirië who plies the road between Anórien and Tharbad. The reduction of his home province to a military territory and the depredations of Castamir's new men have made him a staunch supporter of Eldacar. He avidly collects news of the shifting fate of northern Gondor under the Usurper's reign in the hopes that it will help to prepare the exiled King's immanent return.

Irdamir realizes that Eldacar's ties with loyalist sympathizers in Gondor remain unorganized and often tenuous at this stage; he is prepared to defuse any threat to these fragile ties, even if it means severing contact with "compromised" elements such as the Cabal in Minas Anor. A recent discussion with Amlaith proved unfruitful in confirming the infiltration, and Irdamir has decided to seek the investigatory services of an outside individual or group.

Irdamir is of medium height and build, with a weathered face, brown hair, and blue eyes. He is dressed in a wealthy though unimaginative fashion. He gives the impression of efficiency and strong will.

AMLAITH (1392-1441†)

Amlaith the cloth merchant is the founder and leader of the Cabal. His hatred for the Usurper derives from his sense of betrayal when Castamir repaid Minas Anor's support for the confederacy by deposing Coratar and allowing Ciryang's heavy-handed tactics with the Fellowships in the Conclave. Amlaith is convinced that Eldacar could recover the winged crown of Anárion if the people of Minas Anor were behind him, and so he has devoted his efforts to the organization of loyalist sentiment in the city. Irdamir's presence acted as a catalyst for these hopes.

Amlaith is sure that the Cabal members are not compromised, whatever Irdamir may suspect. The cloth merchant prides himself on his constant attention to security and secrecy in the doings of the Cabal. Of course, Amlaith also realizes that the very nature of his security measures preclude any adequate investigation of this problem.

(See Cabal membership chart below for more information.)

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CABAL

NAME	ALLEGIANCE	RECRUITS	
Amlaith	**loyalist**	**Dior, Voronwë**	**Notes:** Founder and leader of the Cabal. Born in 1398, medium build, brown hair and eyes, self-assured manners.
Dior	**loyalist**	**Baran, Ulrad**	**Notes:** A small-time shopkeeper and business associate of Amlaith. He moved to Minas Anor from Anfalas in 1434 to escape the war, but did not at first involve himself in politics. Direct experience of Castamir's harsh policies have turned him into a staunch loyalist. Born in 1402, small build, brown hair, grey eyes, and a somewhat nervous manner.
Voronwë	**Côr Aran informant**	**Ciryon, Dorlas**	**Notes:** A well-connected owner of a warehouse and ship at the Harlond. He betrayed the Cabal after being captured by the Côr Aran, who keep him as an informer. Born in 1999, overweight and muscular at the same time, grey hair, blue eyes, taciturn.
Baran	**neutral**	**Anborn**	**Notes:** A Booktrader and a friend of Dior. He was recruited after a late evening with some wine and a lot of talk, where he spilled out his dissatisfaction with the present times. He has been caught in something too big for him, but does not dare to leave, nor to inform the authorities. Born in 1410, small and mousy, black hair and eyes, nervous, drinks too much.
Ulrad	**Culcamalin's informant**	**Elros, Estelmo**	**Notes:** A retired soldier and close friend to Culcamalin, Ulrad came to Minas Anor to retire from active military duty. He plots with the Southron captain to expose the Cabal and get rich from the reward. Born in 1403, short and muscular, tanned skin, bleached brown hair, dark eyes, tough military demeanor.
Ciryon	**Côr Aran agent**	**Faramir, Ragnir**	**Notes:** An agent of the Côr Aran, put into the organization after Finrod learned of it. Ciryon avoids suspicion through his passionate commitment to the loyalist cause. He often takes responsibility for spreading the Cabal's propaganda among the people, and other overt expressions of loyalist sentiment. Born in 1390, short and slim, brown hair and eyes, self-confident style.
Dorlas	**The Straight Man's informant**	**Tarcil**	**Notes:** A local merchant with many ties to Pelargir. Dorlas has been an informer for the Straight Man of Pelargir since Tárain took an interest in expanding his influence northwards. Born in 1409, medium build, brown hair and green eyes, quiet and calculating.
Anborn	**loyalist**	**Ostoher, Indor**	**Notes:** An officer of the city garrison. Anborn's concern has always been for the security of Gondor's northern borders against the Easterlings, but his support for a policy of friendship and alliance with the Northmen is more important to him than Eldacar per se. He is regarded as the Cabal's military expert. Born in 1387, pure-blooded Dúnadan, tall and athletic, brown hair and grey eyes, military manners.
Elros	**Côr Aran informant**	**—**	**Notes:** A tanner with a thoroughly mercenary view of politics. Elros was recruited as an informant for one of the Côr Aran cells principally to prevent him from selling his valuable information to the King's enemies. Born in 1406, short and swift, brown hair and blue eyes, excellent actor.
Estelmo	**Estéliel's informant**	**Marach**	**Notes:** A weaponsmith who more or less happened to slip into the Cabal. Estelmo was blackmailed by Estéliel to give her information about the Cabal, but he is unaware that Estéliel herself has loyalist pretensions. Born in 1414, medium height, very muscular, tanned skin, brown hair and eyes, pretends to be more confident than he is.
Faramir	**Coratar's informant**	**Húrin**	**Notes:** A tailor who dislikes the traditionalists and their policies, but whose principal loyalty is towards Minas Anor. After being recruited, he volunteered his services to Coratar. Born in 1399, medium height and frail physique, brown hair and eyes, quiet manners.
Ragnir	**Ciryang informant**	**Handir**	**Notes:** A merchant, many ties to the North. Ragnir was originally a loyalist until reported by a "friend" to Ciryang, who now compels him to betray the Cabal. Born in 1392, medium build, black hair and blue eyes, talkative manners.
Tarcil	**neutral**	**—**	**Notes:** A trade associate of Dorlas who was forced in. Tarcil wants to be left in peace, but does not dare to leave. Born in 1400, medium build, brown hair and eyes, with-drawn manners.
Ostoher	**Borondir's informant**	**—**	**Notes:** A clerk in the commander's office. Ostoher does not care much for the policies of Castamir. After some time he changed his mind, considering the consequences of a renewed civil war on Gondor, and began feeding information about the Cabal to Borondir. Born in 1398, small build, fair hair and grey eyes, shy manners.
Indor	**Côr Aran informant**	**—**	**Notes:** A butcher with strong loyalist sympathies. After being recruited, Indor began to behave suspiciously and was taken by the Crows. He agreed to give information in return for his released. Born in 1410, huge and muscular body, bald-head, grey eyes, insecure manners.
Marach	**Côr Aran informant**	**—**	**Notes:** A shop-keeper who has moved to Minas Anor from Pelargir in 1438. Marach was uncovered by Crow surveillance and forced to turn coat in order to save himself. Born in 1407, medium build, brown hair and blue eyes, nit-picking manners that annoys anyone around him.
Húrin	**Tharbad informant**	**—**	**Notes:** An owner of a livery stable, Húrin has many connections with merchant groups from Tharbad. As a sideline he sells information to them, which includes reports concerning loyalist activities. Born in 1398, medium though athletic build, brown hair and eyes, confident manners.
Handir	**Côr Aran agent**	**—**	**Notes:** An agent from Côr Aran posing as a the owner of a small carrier firm. By saying the right things in the right places, Handir has managed to be recruited. Born in 1398, small and wiry, brown hair and blue eyes, suave smooth manners, always sounds convincing.

FINROD

Due to the chaotic nature of his own organization, Finrod remains unaware that there are other cell operatives inside the Cabal. He is content to have Ciryon keep a close eye on Voronwë and the other Cabal members that he himself has knowledge of, and to wait until the Cabal shows signs of carrying out an open rebellion against the King. Unfortunately for Finrod, the other Côr Aran infiltrator, Handir, has discovered Ciryon's presence. But instead of reporting this fact to Finrod, Handir's cell leader has decided to blacken his chief's name by alerting Caramir in Pelargir. Retribution is on its way, but Finrod does not know it (see Section 7.7). (See also Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

CIRYANG

The president's interest in the Cabal lies primarily in ascertaining the extent to which some or all of its members can be identified with troublesome Fellowship representatives in the Conclave that Ciryang has long wanted to dismiss. This requires that hard evidence be produced, a fact made difficult both by the tight security of the Cabal and the unwilling disposition of his informant. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

BORONDIR

Borondir's concern with the Cabal is to find out whether or not they pose a serious threat to the security of the city. Borondir trusts his informant, confident that Ostoher's change of heart towards the King is genuine, but he is nevertheless unwilling to disclose anything of this to Ciryang or Finrod. Being a man of thoroughness, Borondir desires to wait until he learns the full extent of the Cabal's activity and influence before moving against its members. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

CORATAR

Coratar's interest in the Cabal stems from his desire to make contact with Eldacar's allies in Minas Anor, but the senior statesman of the city is wise enough not to walk into a situation that could potentially reveal his own organization to the authorities; hence the great caution and discretion with which he has approached and studied Amlaith's group. Coratar's instincts in questioning the security of the Cabal are probably going to save him and the future of Lasgalen from the reprisals that now await Amlaith. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

ESTÉLIEL

Estéliel's madness has driven her to spy on the Cabal in order to find out whether it is "evil" or not (i.e., whether or not she can enlist its members as followers in her holy war against Castamir). Estéliel is in for a disappointment, not only because her designs have no connection with reality but because Elros, one of the Côr Aran informants in the Cabal, is aware of Estelmo's contact with her. In fact, Elros has learned from Estelmo of her mad plot to assassinate the Usurper on his coming arrival to Minas Anor for the Council of Gondor (see Section 7.7.1). Estéliel is completely unaware of this development. (See Section 7.5.2 for more information.)

THE STRAIGHT MAN

Tárain is interested in gathering information on any clandestine groups in Minas Anor that could pose a threat to him (or that might prove easy targets for blackmail and extortion by his henchmen). Because of the minimal presence of loyalists in Pelargir, the Straight Man is uncertain about how to deal with this inscrutable Cabal. If they prove powerful enough, he may actually consider supporting them (for purely financial reasons, of course). This, however, is unlikely to happen if the true condition of the Cabal becomes known to him. (See Section 7.5.1 for more information.)

CULCAMALIN

The Southron captain of Anórien is just as intent as his rival in Ithilien at winning himself glory and rich reward for the capture of a powerful enemy of the King. Although the Cabal is not really a threat to Castamir's rule, Culcamalin is perfectly happy to let his friend Ulrad trump up appearances to make it look that way to the authorities when he decides to reveal them. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

7.6.3 THE SETTINGS

Cabal meetings take place all over the city, though the First Circle is usually avoided. Since several members are artisans or businessmen, they often meet in their shops or offices. A common artisan shop and an inn are included below, but the gamemaster is encouraged to make up more.

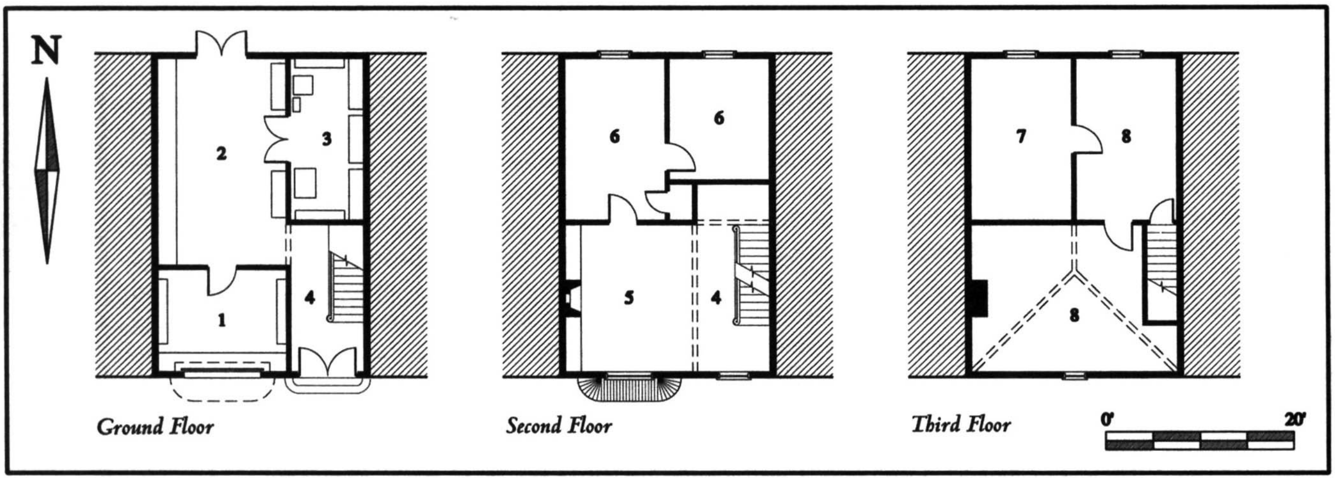
FARAMIR'S TAILOR SHOP

1. **Shopfront. A counter is opened out to the street by** raising a shutter.
2. **Workshop. The working area for** Faramir and his apprentices.
3. **Storeroom.**
4. **Hallway.**
5. **Kitchen.** Possesses space for the entire family and the apprentices.
6. **Faramir's Rooms.** Private.
7. **Apprentices' Room.**
8. **Attic.** Used as storage space.

THE INN BY THE GATE

Amlaith occasionally rents a room (#6) from the innkeeper under the pretext of private gambling sessions (actually used as meeting place). The innkeeper is a close friend of Amlaith's, but has no knowledge of the true nature of the Cabal. The inn has the advantage of several entrances (one from the taproom and two from the outside), so that members can arrive and leave through different ways. They usually don their hoods when entering the meeting-room.

1. **Entrance.** Onto the yard.
2. **Taproom.** There are booths along one wall and benches and tables in the rest of the room.
3. **Bar Counter.**



Faramir's shop

4. Kitchen.

5. Storerooms.

6. Big Room. A room which may be rented for private parties.

7. Yard.

8. Stables. There is space for ten horses.

9. Stable Boy's Room.

10. Wagon Shed. It has enough room for two small wagons.

11. Latrines.

12. Balcony.

13. Guestrooms.

14. Owner's Private Rooms.

15. Servants' Room.

7.6.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to uncover the truly chaotic condition which the Cabal is now in. This entails either spying on or even joining the Cabal in order to learn anything significant. Once they have become aware of the Cabal's inflitration, the characters will have to decide what to do about it; this will depend upon their own loyalties and goals.

Starting the Characters

Characters may have recently done something that makes them susceptible to blackmail, especially in Minas Anor. While enjoying a drink one day at The Inn by the Gate, they are approached by a Dúnadan who presents himself as Irdamir, a merchant from Calenardhon. After some talk, he intimates knowledge of their recent illegal activities.

He also hints, much more subtly, that he is a Crow. He claims that he is fully prepared to forget one or two awkward facts if they are willing to cooperate; otherwise, Finrod might get some information. He wants them to investigate a local loyalist group—a local merchant, Amlaith, is involved, but he also wants to know about its other members.

Irdamir will be leaving the city for four weeks. When he returns, he will contact them at the same place and expect a report on their progress. From here on, the characters must work on their own. Characters attempting to investigate Irdamir will find no connections between him and the Crows in Minas Anor. His claim to be a trader from Calenardhon with a small local office in the city seems to be genuine. They will not be able to discover his true identity.

Aids

The characters must operate outside the official system and may use any investigative method, but ought to be careful since the other loyalists might go into hiding if they feel threatened. Characters should concentrate on unobtrusive surveillance (wining and dining or similar methods), even if rougher courses of action are occasionally feasible. It is also possible to try to insert one (or several) of them into the Cabal as members.

Obstacles

The main obstacle is that everyone involved in the Cabal is secretive and paranoid. Trying to untangle the web is a daunting task, and the gamemaster may also plant a few red herrings. Several Cabal members may have other shady affairs they want to hide, as, for example, Dorlas. A person like Elros has no sense of restraint about what he says and could be a good source of information. Others, such as Húrin or Estelmo, might be vulnerable to blackmail.

Although it should not be too easy to obtain information on the Cabal, nearly all the loyalists are amateurs and as such tend to make things more mysterious than necessary (see Section 7.6.5). Instead of behaving normally, they act as if they have something to hide. Observant characters should be able to ascertain who is involved.

Outcomes

Should the characters succeed in obtaining information on the Cabal, they have several options which may bring either reward or punishment. If they give the information to Irdamir that the Cabal is implicated, they will be rewarded once they get to loyalist territory. On the other hand, if the Crows realize that their operators in the Cabal have been uncovered, they might become rather nasty. Characters could also betray the entire Cabal to the Côr Aran, but would then incur the wrath of Irdamir and Eldacar's subordinates, who will pursue this matter even after the end of the Kin-strife.

If unable to discover that the Cabal is compromised, Irdamir would probably try to get rid of the characters because they have too much knowledge about the loyalists in Anórien. The Crows might also become suspicious of character activities and haul them in as a loyalist group they have "uncovered." Irdamir is ruthless, fully prepared to annihilate the network if it is compromised but equally prepared to annihilate his investigators in the opposite case.

7.6.5 ENCOUNTERS

The entire Cabal meets at irregular intervals. It is fairly common that two members meet, but larger gatherings are infrequent. To ensure the secrecy (and to satisfy conspiracy romantics) black hoods are used during meetings with more than two persons. A Cabal member knows only the one who recruited him and the one or two he himself has recruited.

When the Cabal has large gatherings they sometimes use a private room (#6) at the Inn by the Gate. It is unlikely that characters would get to know more than a few of the Cabal members. These should generally be considered to be lvl 3-4 Scout/Rogues, Scholar/Artisans, or Warriors. None has any knowledge of magic nor do any possess magic objects.

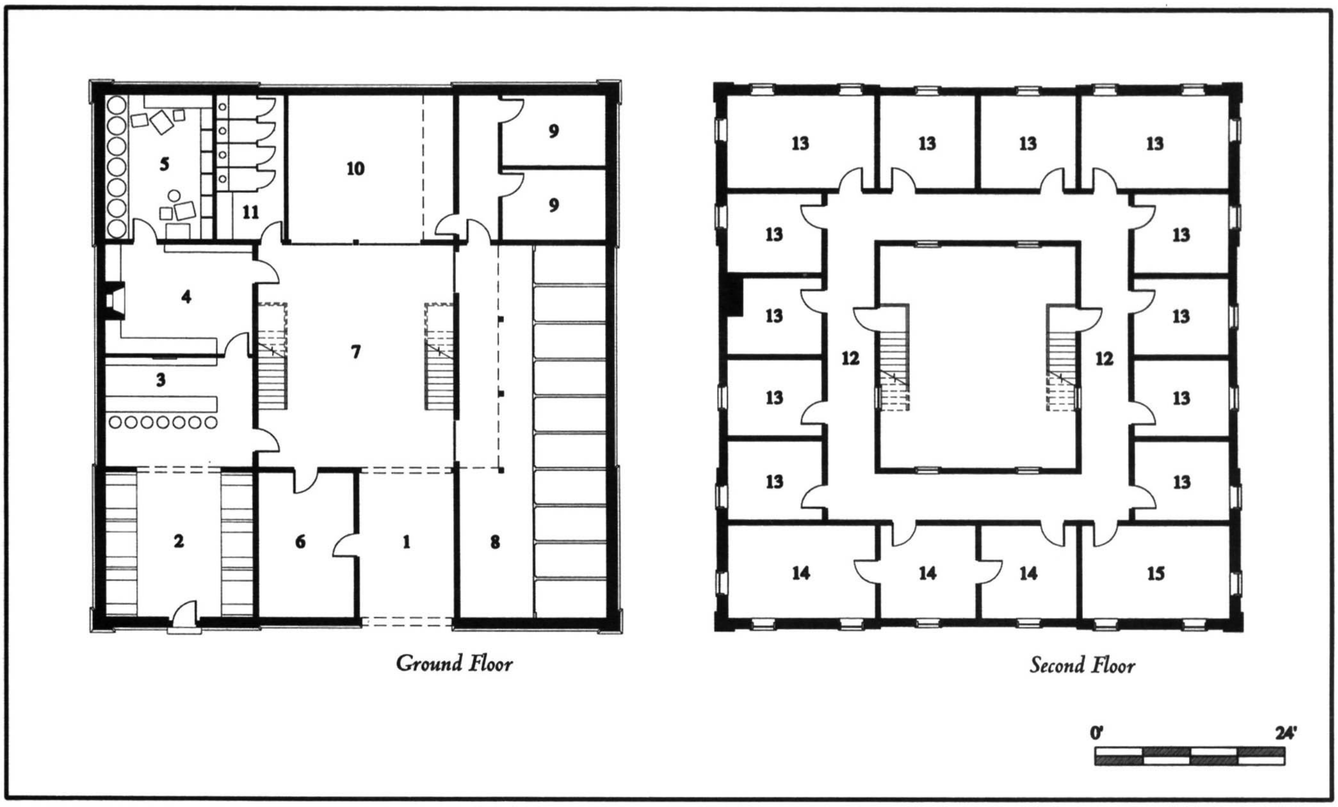
7.7 ADVENTURE: THE COUNCIL OF GONDOR

It is within the Council of Gondor that the Usurper is most subject to the constraints of Númenórean law and tradition; nevertheless, Castamir's refusal to establish court in Osgiliath has inevitably altered the significance which its members attribute to this annual gathering of powers in Minas Anor. Now, all of the prominent leaders of the realm come to the city expecting to make demands upon and relinquish concessions to the new King in the furtherance of their own purposes. Their grievances will become bargaining chips in a perennial negotiation for the destiny of Gondor.

7.7.1 A TALE OF TRADITION AND INNOVATION

There are many pressing matters that face King Castamir upon his arrival at the gates of Minas Anor in 1441. The restoration of order in Osgiliath after the recent uprisings must be addressed (though secretly the Usurper smiles at the success of his machinations in the guarded city). The scandalous rape of Osgiliath's hallows must be stopped and their desecrators brought to justice. The growing mercenary problem in Anórien must somehow be dealt with before it assumes epidemic proportions. And lastly, the highly irregular circumstances accompanying the demise of the princes of Belfalas and Morthond demands that the matter of succession be brought before the general council for debate.

The Inn by the Gate



Castamir is fully prepared to resolve these issues in a responsible and effective way, but only if their solutions will serve his primary desire for official recognition of his removal of the royal seat to Pelargir. The King aims to make resolution of the pending issues of the council contingent upon the realization of this design. The majority of those attending the council are aware of this (though they are unaware of the extent of the King's manipulation of affairs in the North); however, they do not intend to lose the battle for Osgiliath without a fight—nor without many stringent concessions from the King.

In addition to these larger council matters, Castamir plans to take care of some "private" business in Minas Anor: the elimination and replacement of Finrod and the reorganization of the city's Côr Aran branch on sounder principals. Finrod's mishandling of the loyalist Cabal and similar problems has convinced Caramir that change is called for. The Côr Aran mastermind has already laid his plans for accomplishing this so that it will assist his royal cousin by increasing the perception of disorder in Minas Anor. This will further influence public opinion in favor of relocating the capital away from the North.

The reason for Finrod's discharge is to be his failure to detect an (actual) assassination plot against the King. Estéliel Harnastin, the half-mad, would-be loyalist leader of Minas Anor has decided that Castamir will die by her own hand when he arrives in the city on Loëndë. Unfortunately for Estéliel, one of her trusted accomplices, Marach, is a Côr Aran agent. Instead of informing Finrod immediately of the plot, however, Marach has sent word of it only to Caramir.

This knowledge will allow Caramir to frustrate Estéliel's attempt on his cousin while also making Finrod look bad because of his ignorance. Estéliel will be captured but spared, for propaganda purposes—to display the "clemency" of the King even towards his enemies, as well as to demonstrate the unsound state of mind that must accompany all attempts to oppose the Usurper. Finrod's incompetence will provide suitable grounds for his dismissal; it will also serve as a pretext for a late-night "summons" before Caramir for judgement (which will result in a gruesome death). This chain of events will set the tone of the council that is to follow.

7.7.2 THE NPCS

Some hundred men and women from all corners of the realm attend the Council of Gondor, though not all will have the opportunity to voice their opinions. Cliques and factions typically form around individuals who possess enough clout to be heard. The following list of participants is limited to those who appear elsewhere in this module and is to be taken as representative rather than exhaustive.

KING CASTAMIR

The Usurper views the upcoming council with great concern, given the increasing possibility of removing the capital to Pelargir. Such a victory would be more than merely symbolic—it would justify the further withdrawal of revenues from the North and break the final remnant of the council's hegemony over him. Such important consequences of the council necessitate that Castamir be on his best public behavior, so as not to provide any pretext for hidden antagonisms to show themselves against him at this crucial moment in his career. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

QUEEN MÛRABÊTH

Although there is no law against the participation of women in the Council of Gondor, Mûrabêth possesses no officially recognized political prerogative in Gondor and so she will not be invited to the council sessions. In truth, the queen exercises influence over some council members—in particular, with regard to the land and sea factions in Umbar (see Section 4.6). Mûrabêth will actively hold audience on numerous occasions with her father's allies and will be busy behind the scenes forging new alliances or extending existing ones, the most important of which will be her sister's marriage to Daeron, the Squire of Linhir. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

LORD MORLAEN

Morlaen presides over the Council of Gondor, which means that he is responsible for directing the course of discussion and mediating between opposing viewpoints. He also holds the power to silence any disruptive behavior that may arise during the sessions. He has no control over what transpires among council members outside the official gatherings. Lord Morlaen is Mûrabêth's chief rival, and he views the council as a battleground for their respective bids to gain influence over the powerful of Gondor. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

CARAMIR

After disposing of Finrod, Caramir intends to subject the city's Côr Aran branch to a thorough examination and rehauling. In particular, he will see to it that more secure lines of communication are established between Minas Anor and Pelargir. His main concern following the reorganization will be to appoint a new chief, whom he will personally choose from among the existing ranks. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

PRESIDENT CIRYANG

Ciryang's interest in the Council of Gondor is mostly restricted to its juridical aspects. He will petition Morlaen to have the council consider several problematic cases that have arisen within the Conclave during the last year. Beyond this, he will wholeheartedly support the proposal to construct a new royal hallow beneath the spur of

Mindolluin (the presence of a sacred site would greatly increase the prestige of his jurisdiction). Ciryang will also try to have a hand in the appointment of the new Côr Aran chief—preferably someone who will be easier to work with than Finrod. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

Steward Heruvorn

Heruvorn will be present at the council only to support the King's line that the current state of disorder and instability in the North is endemic and irreparable, and that Osgiliath ought to be abandoned as the capital. None of the other issues addressed by the council will be of much concern to him, except perhaps the land-sea faction debate (since a greater commitment of land troops to the territory of Umbar might put a drain on his own military needs in Ithilien). (See Section 8.4.4 for more information.)

Lord Calimon

Calimon comes to the council of 1441 in the wake of a significant uprising of Osgiliath against him, and he expects his handling of the situation to be closely scrutinized. He is, however, less worried about the council's public opinion since he knows that his actions are in line with the King's private plans for the guarded city. Nevertheless, Calimon wishes to avoid another such revolt by the people of the capital; to that end, he will petition Morlaen to bring the Lady Mórdulin before the council for judgement, in the hopes that he can convince them to disallow the Day of Memory in the future. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

Governor Elendin

As governor of Harondor and uncle to the King, Elendin will be the foremost advocate of the land faction. He and Mûrabêth will have private meetings concerning their goals and strategies; as a near-equal in prestige to Morlaen, Elendin will play an important role in winning supporters for their cause. He will also spend a good deal of non-council time with Castamir, mostly for the simple purpose of renewing their longstanding friendship. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

Governor Alandur

Alandur will speak his mind in favor of removing the capital from the North, attesting as evidence the new loyalist menace in Calenardhon and the growing mercenary problem. As the dutiful son of Elendin, he will equally lend his support to the queen's land-faction cause. Although his isolation in Calenardhon makes this faction fighting of little political consequence to himself, Alandur has many personal ties with the Raj and does not relish the idea of a military venture against them. (See Section 2.2.1 for more information.)

Prince Aradan

The only surviving son of the late Prince Adrazôr of Belfalas faces a difficult succession. Although the chosen heir of his father, the unexplained circumstances surrounding the swift succession of deaths in both Morthond and Belfalas have understandably raised questions about young Aradan's integrity and character which must be put to rest before all in Gondor will be willing to recognize his legitimacy. Aradan has therefore come to Minas Anor ready to defend his claim.

Although the other issues to be dealt with by the council do not directly impact his family's fief, Aradan may nevertheless be drawn into the land and sea faction dispute by his late father's ambassador to Pelargir, Daeron, who has been nominated by the Crown Council to investigate the matter of the succession. Aradan will also fervently defend the honor of his sister, Mórdulin, against whatever accusations Calimon may level and will support the traditional location of the capital in Osgiliath and the retention of the Day of Memory. (See Section 5.4.4 for more information.)

Daeron

In gratitude for services rendered on behalf of the queen in Umbar (see Section 4.6), Mûrabêth has announced the betrothal of her sister Telerien to the Squire of Linhir. They are to be wed by the King in Minas Anor at the conclusion of the Council of Gondor. Still under the illusion that Daeron's interests are at one with his own, Castamir has appointed the Squire to head the investigatory commission to consider Aradan's claim.

While the council is in session, Daeron will privately interview Aradan about the events surrounding his father's death, making it clear to the aspiring prince that he will offer the council a positive recommendation on Aradan's behalf only if Daeron receives his word that Belfalas will support Telemnar's land faction in Umbar. Furthermore, Daeron will suggest that Aradan nominate him to act as Estel's steward and guardian in Morthond, in order to avoid Lord Morlaen taking over the fief. Telerien will be present in Minas Anor for her wedding, but will take no part in the council. (See Section 5.1.2 for more information.)

Estel

Yet another problem for the council to address is the related question of the future of Morthond. Unlike the case of Aradan, the only surviving male heir of Morthond's princely line has failed to claim his inheritance, leaving an insane woman as the only apparent alternative. Presently under Mórdulin's protection and care, the young Estel will be in Minas Anor during the council and may well be summoned for an "examination" by those chosen to decide Morthond's fate.

While the royal custom of male succession is undisputed, Morthond has a tradition of both male and female succession which, when combined with its legal autonomy from Gondor's kingship, complicates the issue significantly. There is much at stake politically in the council's decision about Morthond. Castamir must now tread lightly over the matter of feudal autonomy west of the Gilrain, given his scheming to destroy the princely lines that rival his authority. On the other hand, he cannot afford to relinquish any more power to Aradan, especially if the latter succeeds in persuading the council to accept his claim to Belfalas.

Then, too, there is the practical issue of Estel's maturity and questionable state of mind. Estel herself is too far gone even to understand why everyone is so concerned about her late parents' fief and is herself wholly disinterested in such matters, preferring to spend her time picking flowers in the gardens of the Houses of Healing. Mórdulin realizes this, but also recognizes the importance of keeping possession of Morthond away from Castamir's greedy clutches. (See Section 5.6.2 for more information.)

LADY MÓRDULIN

Mórdulin is not troubled by the summons to appear before the council and answer for her recent actions in Osgiliath. She fears neither the Usurper nor the possibility of death at the hands of his henchmen—she is prepared to face a martyr's fate if need be and will boldly denounce the King if given the opportunity. Her only true anxiety is for Estel's safety. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

CORATAR

The former president of the Conclave will be allowed to participate in the decisions of the council, though he will not be invited to give advice on any particular issue. Coratar is aware of what is at stake, but will not show any sign of personal investment in the outcome, preferring instead to make his views felt through others to whom he will offer counsel during the proceedings. In reality, Coratar's highest priority will be to feel out the true loyalties of each of the council members, hoping to find a few who might eventually lend their aid to the cause of Lasgalen. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

LÓRIN

Lórin does not look forward to the Council of Gondor because it entails several private interviews with the Usurper and the interruption of his normal duties with respect to the palantír. The seer is also concerned about the fate of his cousins from Belfalas since, like Coratar, his role in the council is restricted to that of an advisor. Unlike the former president, the intensification of Lórin's duties to the King leaves him with little time even for informal involvement with the council members. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

PARMANDIL

Parmandil's main concern is with the restoration of the royal hallows, and he supports the construction of a new complex in Minas Anor (where, he reasons, the treasures of the Kings will be better protected against sacrilegious tomb robbers). He will not be permitted to engage the council in debate over this issue, but will be called upon for "expert advice" on the matter. His report to the council will draw the attention of Zimrakhil. (See Section 6.6.2 for more information.)

ZIMRAKHIL

Zimrakhil will attend the Council of Gondor in his capacity as ambassador for the Southron Confederacy, and as such will present a favorable view of Governor Telemnar's land faction in Umbar. During his stay in Minas Anor, Zimrakhil will visit with Captain Culcamalin (see Section 7.4.4) and glean from him all of the local news. The sorcerer will also try to do Castamir the favor of apprehending the tomb robbers, once he learns that they have the Vase of Dreams (see Section 7.8). Belphegor will be present with him at all times. (See Section 2.3.2 for more information.)

CURUNÍR

As an emissary of the Valar, Curunír will not attempt to influence the course of the council in any way. At Castamir's request, however, the white wizard has been asked to speak a few opening words to those assembled at the official commencement of the council sessions (thereby renewing the Usurper's claims to legitimacy in his royal prerogatives as an heir of Anárion). Curunír is, of course, interested in the outcome of the council's proceedings and will often be seen conversing with prominent council members between sessions. (See Section 2.2.8 for more information.)

ESTÉLIEL

Estéliel plans to kill the King during a reception to be held on the evening of his arrival in the gardens of the sixth circle. Her newly gained accomplice, Marach, is supposed to aid her in this, but all he will in fact do is keep Finrod's security from becoming aware of Estéliel's threat until she has already assaulted the King. At that point, Marach will betray her, holding back the woman's blade just before it touches Castamir's flesh. This will give authenticity to the attempt, while making Finrod's security seem ineffectual. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

FINROD

Finrod knows that Caramir is accompanying the King to Minas Anor, and the paranoid Côr Aran chief is desperately struggling to put his household in order before they arrive. He is unaware of the gravity of his situation, but is intelligent enough to make every effort to find out what trouble he may have gotten himself into before it is too late. Unfortunately, events will move swiftly once Castamir passes the city gates on Loëndë, and Finrod will be overtaken by his superior's machinations to get rid of him. (See Section 7.4.4 for more information.)

7.7.3 THE SETTINGS

The Council of Gondor is traditionally held in the Hall of Isildur over two three-hour sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Common meals and refreshments are served in the High Hall, while private interviews with the King or other officially recognized council members take place within the security of the Tower of Anárion. The King and his immediate relatives are housed in the High Hall, but the majority of the council participants stay either in appointed lodgings in the sixth level, or have their own residences elsewhere in the city. Informal meetings between sessions may take place on the seventh level until dark, after which individual arrangements must be made. The sixth level lodgings contain several well-appointed rooms suitable for informal gatherings, which are reserved for the use of council members. (See Section 7.2.1 for more information.)

7.7.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to participate in the council and to affect its resolutions. How the player-characters set out to accomplish this—and to what ends—will depend largely upon their own political status (i.e., whether or not they are allowed to participate directly in the council) and goals. The purpose of the adventure is to enable the characters to interact at close quarters with the powerful and privileged of Gondor.

There are three arenas for player-character involvement in the Council of Gondor. The first is at the level of the formal proceedings, which consist of general public sessions. The second level of interaction is in one of the many informal private meetings among particular cliques with common interests. The third sphere of action lies outside the council where it affects the internal politics of the city. The arena a character decides to participate in depends upon who he is and what he hopes to achieve.

Starting the Characters

There are several ways in which characters may be drawn into this adventure, the first and most obvious being invitation to the council. But this presumes that the characters in question possess enough status or influence in Gondor to warrant such an invitation. Where this is not the case, characters must be content with less direct forms of participation.

They may, for instance, already be residents of Minas Anor who will inevitably be affected by the deliberations of the council (see Section 7.3.4). More specifically, they might be active in some branch of the city administration. Côr Aran characters, for instance, may be called upon by Caramir to assist him in deposing Finrod. Alternatively, they might be members of one of the loyalist groups seeking to use the Usurper's visit to the city as an opportunity for mayhem.

Otherwise unconnected mercenary types will find a profitable market for all manner of informal services on behalf of one of the many power cliques that form over the course of the council's sessions. Since friends and enemies often change positions during the council, there will be potential vendettas and infighting in the offing (though this will not be allowed to get out of hand under the watchful eye of the King). In short, the Council of Gondor acts as a magnet for a variety of "satellite" scenarios.

Aids

For characters who have access to the council's deliberations, the most important channel for achieving their goals will be through political alliance with other council participants with similar interests or viewpoints. This will entail approaching and meeting with potential allies (for which there will be ample opportunity during the two or three weeks that the council is in session). Aid and assistance may be sought out both among one's own peers and among those with greater power (up to and including the King himself). For those characters who are not privy to the council process, the critical aid will be in staying well-informed about what transpires in the council chambers.

Obstacles

Obstacles may have less to do with who the characters are (though lack of access to the council is an obvious instance) than with the particular nature of their goals. One obstacle to the attainment to one's ends may be the political structure of the council itself, since Castamir has already so manipulated problems that their solution will require compromise with the King's own objectives (and vice versa). Another obstacle to satisfactory resolution is the fragmentation of the council into opposing cliques between sessions, making it difficult to stay completely informed about what others are thinking or planning to do at the next session.

Outcomes

The outcome of debate over the various issues raised by the council cannot be determined with certainty, especially if player-characters occupy influential positions in the decision-making process. However, should the characters neglect (or fail) to affect certain issues, the following sequence of resolutions may be employed by the gamemaster as "default" outcomes: 1) Castamir agrees to finance the construction of the new royal hallows in Minas Anor; 2) the King will sign a death warrant for both the tomb robbers (see Section 7.8) and the unruly mercenary elements in Anórien (see Section 9.2); 3) Aradan will be recognized as the prince of Belfalas; and 4) Estel will be confirmed as the future princess of Morthond, with the provision that the fief be placed under the stewardship of Daeron until Estel reaches her majority and is healed of her madness.

Longstanding conflicts, such as that between the land and sea factions, are less easily resolved because they are so enmeshed in the fabric of the political structure. The marriage of Daeron and Telerien, and the anticipated support of Linhir for the queen's father in Umbar, will lead to a redrawing of the lines of rivalry, but will solve nothing. The central issue of the capital should remain unresolved unless the player-characters themselves are able to alter the course of events dramatically; otherwise, Castamir will simply have to wait another year to try again.

7.7.5 ENCOUNTERS

The Council of Gondor convenes for at least two weeks (depending on how long it takes to come to a decision on a given issue). During this time, the characters will have numerous opportunities to involve themselves in one of the many debates (or create one of their own). "The Convening of the Council" establishes the ground rules for debate, and the NPCs section indicates which council members are likely to become involved in a given issue.

THE ROYAL PROCESSION

The King's entrance into Minas Anor takes place on Loëndë, Mid-year's day; the Council of Gondor convenes on the following morning. Many of the participants will already have arrived to meet with friends and allies to discuss plans and strategies for the coming weeks, while others will arrive at other times on Loëndë, making for a more or less permanent procession of entourages through the Great Gates. Castamir will be escorted by the Royal Guard of Pelargir (see Section 3.3.3), which will displace three of the guard companies normally housed in the Upper Barracks in the seventh level of the city for the duration of the King's stay (see Section 7.2.1).

Castamir will arrive in the city with his family: Queen Mûrabêth, Lord Morlaen, Governor Elendin, Caramir, Lady Telerien, and Squire Daeron (the last being a surprise to most people, and a cause for many rumors). Pomp and circumstance will accompany their arrival at the Great Gates, where they will be formally welcomed by Coratar (one of his remaining ceremonial functions). The King will say a few words of greeting to his assembled subjects, eliciting loud cheers and praises. The soldiers present there are sufficient to discourage any expression of true sentiments that might be considered objectionable to the royal entourage.

The King's procession will follow the long, winding way up through the crowd-lined streets of the city to the Citadel of the seventh level, where President Ciryang and the most prominent members of the Conclave will offer a second welcome. Before settling in to his summer residence, Castamir will announce a feast and celebration to be held at dusk in the gardens of the sixth level, in honor of all the council members who have come.

THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

The evening celebration in the gardens of the sixth level is not restricted to the council members, although the Royal Guard will ensure that no "undesirables" or commoners are allowed in; all of the nobility and prominent men and women of the city will be welcome. Nevertheless, Finrod will have the place crawling with Côr Aran (in disguise, of course) in order to prevent any mishaps.

Unfortunately, Estéliel is being escorted in by one of them (see Section 7.7.2). Marach will screen Estéliel from any harassment by Finrod's men as she closes in on Castamir through the crowd. The King will be found conversing with his cousin Caramir (who knows what is about to happen). Finrod is standing nearby, talking with another council member.

Unless one of the player-characters notices Estéliel and tries to hinder her, she will actually spring upon the King swifter than Marach expected, managing to bury the blade of her dagger into the King's right leg, wounding him seriously. She will be apprehended and restrained by both Marach and Caramir before she is able to do any further damage. Crying out for fear that he has been mortally wounded, Mûrabêth will rush toward her husband, followed by Morlaen and the other family members.

Several weapons will be drawn upon the assailant, who curses the Usurper wildly for the murder of her father, but Castamir will yell out orders that she is not to be touched. Instead, being helped to his feet, the King will summon Finrod and publicly reprimand him for his near-fatal lack of security. Then, turning to his would-be assassin, the Usurper will address those around him. Identifying her as the daughter of Barahir Harnastin, Castamir proceeds to moralize about the inherent violence of loyalists and children of loyalists, blaming the poor situation in the North on the insanity they bring to the people.

Estéliel herself will be completely broken in spirit at this point and will collapse in a quivering mass of tears and cursing—she has missed her only opportunity to truly avenge her family's dishonor. The Usurper will command that she be taken under guard to the Houses of Healing, there to undergo "treatment" for her madness. He apologizes to all those assembled for the interruption of what should have been a celebration and orders a healer brought to his chambers on the seventh level to tend to his wound.

FINROD'S FATE

After the celebration has disbanded, Caramir will summon Finrod to a private meeting in the Tower of Anárion. There, Marach (and other Côr Aran of the Minas Anor branch) will testify against their former chief, exposing his many errors in dealing with the organization and its goals. Caramir will invite Finrod to grovel and then promptly have him thrown over the parapet to a fatal crash on the pavement seven hundred feet below. His broken body will be found the next morning before the Great Gates, and Caramir will arrange for rumors to be circulated that he was killed by Estéliel's loyalist friends.

The Convening of the Council

The following morning, the council members will take their appointed seats in the Hall of Isildur. Curunír will arrive with the King and will give a oration on the virtues of law and order established through the will of the Valar as mediated through Númenórean law and the King. He will play no further role in the council.

Lord Morlaen will rise from his seat, following the wizard's speech and officially open the council after observing sunrise. The first order of business will be to allow each of the assembled council members to voice their opinions on what matters should be made the object of debate. Because there are nearly a hundred participants, this will take up the entire first day of the proceedings.

Each petition will be duly recorded by a scribe after Morlaen has given the council member leave to speak. After the day's sessions, Morlaen will consult with Castamir privately concerning the order and manner in which issues should be addressed. The next morning, an agenda for the council will be drawn up and read out loud to the assembly.

How the petitions are actually formulated for discussion is controlled by Morlaen (and, informally, by the King), which gives him considerable leeway for downplaying potentially explosive issues in the interests of the King. Once the agenda has been read, the first topic of debate will commence under Morlaen's mediation. Castamir will insist that the first issue to be discussed be the manifest lack of security in Minas Anor against rebel loyalists.

7.8 ADVENTURE: THE TOMB ROBBERS

The civil disorder brought about by the Usurper's reign has created new prosperity for the ill-counsels of greed and avarice. The unscrupulous have soared to new heights of impiety, and sacrilege has become a way of life for those few who would previously not have deigned to plunder the wealth of the dead, much less the goods of the living. But tomb-robbing is no slight offense in the eyes of the Dúnedain, for whom the grave is a hallowed thing, and instant death awaits the desecrator, whether his captor be traditionalist or loyalist.

7.8.1 A TALE OF GREED AND GRAVES

Although materially better off than the vast majority of his countrymen, a certain goldsmith of Minas Anor—one Goromil—was obsessed with regaining the wealth and prestige which his once-famous family had possessed. Goromil resolved to plunder the hallows of Osgiliath in the confusion following the Kin-strife, a task requiring a reasonably large organization of competent and trustworthy henchmen. Recruitment was a serious difficulty, given the sacrilegious nature of the goldsmith's proposal, and Goromil was consequently forced to treat with a motley crew of outcasts and amoral types.

The crafty goldsmith had a plan to match his ambitions. Through the assistance of a dishonest merchant named Saeros (see Section 6.6.2), Goromil's men were able to enter the guarded city and carry out their ill-gotten treasure without detection by the Usurper's soldiery. Items unlikely to be recognized were sold as soon as possible, while objects too easily identifiable were melted down for their gold or silver (often at the expense of some of their original value). A few treasures of exceptional beauty were hoarded by Goromil himself.

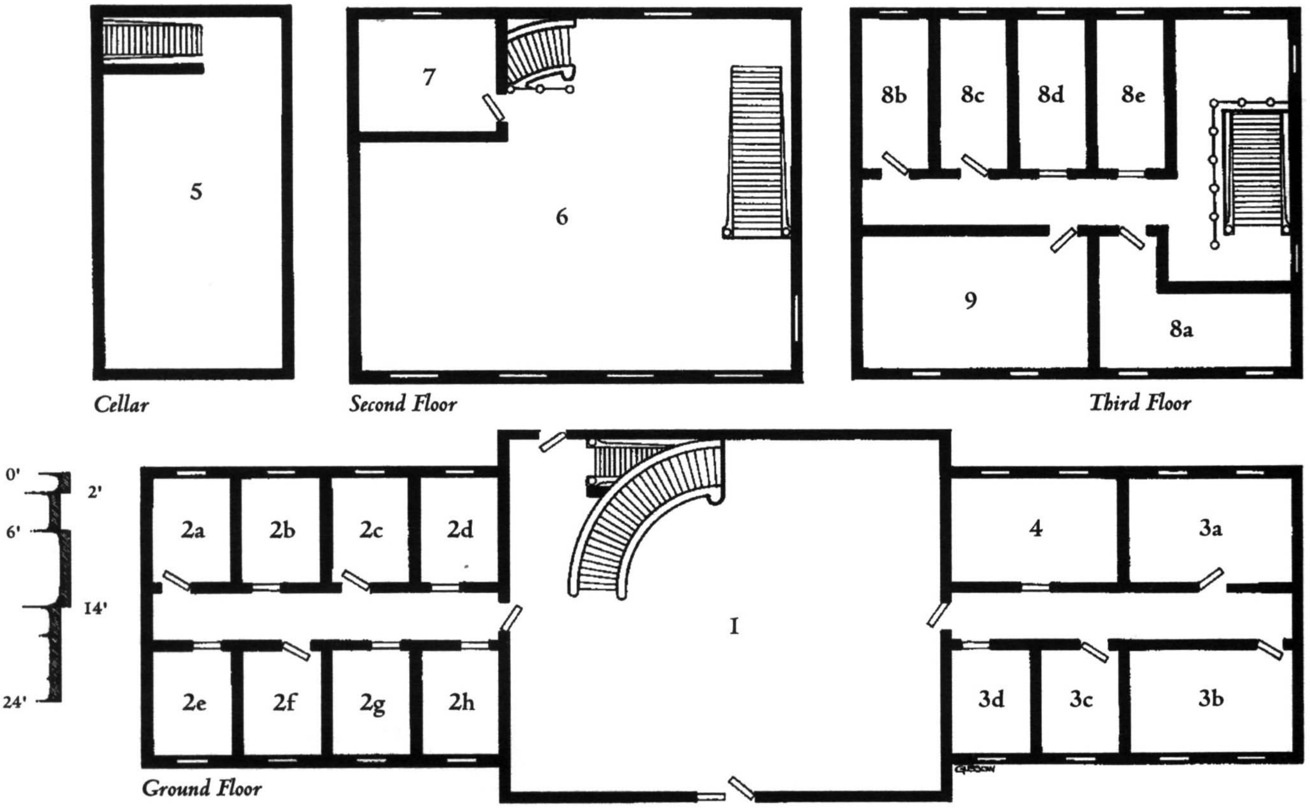
The turning point in Goromil's career came when a fortuitous chain of events led to his invasion of the royal hallows beneath the ruined Citadel of Stars, which won for him the burial riches of a legendary Gondorian general (see Section 6.6.5). This impious deed brought his activities unwanted notoriety and it also brought a perilous addition to his private hoard.

This is the Vase of Dreams, a sorcerous artifact recovered from the ruins of Vamag during King Ciryaher's wars of conquest in the Harad. Its virtue (or curse) lies in the unwholesome influence the Vase holds over its owner's sleep—and, later, over his waking hours—until it drives the hapless victim to death or madness. The Vase has already begun to affect the unsuspecting Goromil, yet this is the least of the dangers now confronting him.

The rape of Osgiliath's royal hallows has stirred widespread outrage in Minas Anor—especially among those noble houses whose family crypt lies inside the guarded city. Calimon the Steward has been publicly upbraided for allowing so lawless a deed to take place within his walls, and influential men have made formal petitions to the Council of Gondor for the apprehension and punishment of the offenders. So great was the force of public opinion, that the Usurper had to part with coveted northern revenues in order to increase funding for the evacuation of ancestral tombs from the Citadel of Stars and their re-internment in an entirely new mortuary complex in Minas Anor.

Castamir is infuriated at the personal cost he has incurred by this sprawling financial obligation, and he has announced a rich reward to whomever can bring him the culprits. There is another in Minas Anor who also takes interest in the capture of these grave-robbers, but not for their sacrilege. The prophet Zimrakhil, ambassador for the Southron Confederacy and secret servant of Adûnaphel, is well aware of the Vase of Dreams, and seeks to acquire it for his own nefarious purposes.

A brief investigation of Minas Anor's library confirmed to Zimrakhil that the Vase had been plundered from his mistress' former stronghold by Hyarmendacil's general, Ciryatan, and that the latter brought the artifact back with him to Osgiliath (shortly before dying of mysterious causes). Zimrakhil does not yet know who these tomb-robbers are or where they can be found, but he is sure that amid the cacophony of voices crying out for retribution against the defilers, he will be able to recruit someone who will find them for him.



Goromil's House

7.8.2 THE NPCS

Master Goromil (1352-1441†)

Goromil is the wealthy goldsmith who orchestrates the activities of the tomb-robbers. Goromil is a widower, and all his children have left his home in the third level of the city (see Section 7.2.1). His two daughters are married to other goldsmiths and his only son has run away to join the rebels. Goromil rarely meets any of his henchmen face to face, but instead uses his trusted servant Harmandil to carry messengers and plunder to and from his house.

Goromil is tall and fairly slim with thinning gray hair. He dresses in a simple, old-fashioned manner and seeks to present himself as a conservative Dúnadan gentleman. Goromil has just begun to be affected by the Vase of Dreams, which has made him lose a lot of sleep (he may appear noticeably tired and weary).

Harmandil (1385-1441†)

Harmandil is Goromil's most trusted servant (having served the master goldsmith for nearly fifty years). Privately, Harmandil despises tomb-robbing, but will do nothing to spoil his master's secret activities. Harmandil is the only one among Goromil's henchman who has knowledge of his master's plans.

He is short and stocky with a bald head and pale blue eyes. He acts very slowly and deliberately, something that has given him a (not undeserved) reputation for stupidity.

Amdir (1989-1441†)

Amdir is one of Goromil's henchmen. He is a deserter from the confederate army who originally served in a line infantry unit. Amdir's mental health has been deteriorating for some time as a result of the stress caused by his battlefield experiences, and he is subject to fits of unreasoning rage and (unknown to his employer) bouts of amnesia. During his fits of berserker rage he has +10 OB, -10 DB and +20 RR against such spells as Charm Kind and Calm Song.

Amdir is a tall, muscular man with a ragged scar down his right cheek. If possible he will carry a whole arsenal (most of it plundered from the hallows), which includes a two-handed sword (+15), a shortsword (+15) and a dagger (+10). He also owns a suit of chainmail (+10) which he will wear if he suspects danger.

Neldorn (1417-1441†)

Neldorn is another of Goromil's henchmen. Formerly a member of the Cats, Goromil recruited this burglar because of his special skills and knowledge of the city. Unlike most professional thieves, Neldorn is torn between the contradictory drives of greed and cowardice; consequently, he has few friends among the underworld, where he is berated for the inactivity which so often conquers him.

Neldorn is a short, slim and dexterous fellow from the dregs of pre-1438 Osgiliath. His dark hair is cut very short. His brown eyes are darting and perceptive. He dresses inconspicuously as a poor city-dweller, usually in dark brown, a color that easily blends into the surroundings during a moonless night.

Ringmir (1407-1441†)

Ringmir is a former apprentice of Goromil's and now a tomb-robber. Goromil hired Ringmir for the latter's knowledge of precious metals. Ringmir was also selected for his ruthlessness, having been expelled from his guild for drunken brawling.

He is of average height and very muscular, and tends to wear expensive and flashy clothing with a silver-hilted dagger, except when "working." His nose has been badly broken from a tavern fight, and he is missing half of his right ear.

Saeros

Saeros' success in helping to obtain the treasures of the royal hallows has won him Goromil's respect, but not his trust. The merchant's lack of discretion in disposing of his share of the loot, combined with his continued drinking problem, have led Goromil to view him as more of a liability than an asset. The recent public attention turned on the goldsmith's activities has given Goromil cause to fear that the unstable merchant might make a mistake or lose his cool at some inopportune moment, and reveal them to the authorities. Goromil's fears are justified. (See Section 6.6.2 for more information.)

Zimrakhil

Zimrakhil cares nothing about Goromil and his band—his only interest is in acquiring the Vase of Dreams. The clever sorcerer intends to use its evil powers to destroy the Lady Mórdulin (and thereby win for himself the undying gratitude of the Usurper), by having the artifact placed near to Estéliel in the Houses of Healing. Zimrakhil hopes that he will be able to amplify the Vase's powers through his own black arts and drive the already mad Estéliel to attack and kill Mórdulin (thus scoring another victory in Castamir's propaganda campaign about the threat of loyalist terrorism even against the Healers of Minas Anor). (See Section 2.3.2 for more information.)

7.8.3 THE SETTINGS

Goromil's House

This ancient, somewhat run-down building on the third level of the city has been owned by Goromil's family for many centuries, and one of the goldsmith's cherished dreams is its restoration to former glory; the residence is nevertheless quite imposing, bearing testimony to the skill of the masons and architects of Minas Anor. All of its locks are of ordinary quality.

1. Entrance Hall. The floor is covered with somewhat faded mosaics depicting scenes of Gondor's early history.

2a-h. Servants' Rooms. These contain only furniture, clothing and so on. 2g and 2h are unused and quite dusty. 2b is Harmandil's room.

3a-d. Guestrooms. These are fairly luxurious but have not been used for years and are unpleasantly cold and musty.

4. Bath. Toilet and bathing facilities.

5. Cellar. Mainly used to store food, wine, beer etc.

6. Dining Hall. The floor is covered with mosaics similar to those in the entrance hall.

7. Kitchen.

8a-e. Bedrooms. The only one in regular use is Goromil's own room (8a), but the others are kept in good condition for visits from his daughters' families. All are richly decorated with tapestries and expensive furniture. Goromil keeps his cache of valued artifacts in an iron chest with three separate locks beneath his bed. Stolen artifacts identified as or suspected of being magical are kept by Goromil in a chest beneath his bed.

9. Study. This room is quite spartan, reflecting Goromil's tastes. He keeps fifty-seven silver pieces in a pouch on the table for everyday expenses.

Goromil's Hoard

This hoard, which no one else has seen, includes the following items:

1. A dagger (+10) that never needs sharpening.
2. A battered bronze ring (a +2 spell adder).
3. A golden cloak-clasp (which allows the wearer to cast Detect Essence 4 times a day).
4. A very ornate shortsword (which is not magical, though Goromil believes so).
5. A short silver wand (also not magical).
6. A silver-shod wand of rowan wood (a x2 PP multiplier).
7. The Vase of Dreams. This is a unique artifact of Southron origin, which Goromil's henchmen stole from the tomb of one of Hyarmendacil's generals. It appears to be a fairly ordinary bronze vase, but has a most insidious and unpleasant effect upon its owner and those nearby. After someone has been in the possession of the Vase for 2D10+10 days, he or she experiences a series of horrifying dreams, which are so unpleasant that it may be difficult to remember them afterwards. Each week after the first that these dreams continue, the dreamer loses 1D10 IT and CO. The Vase has a range of two hundred feet. If the owner permanently moves out of range, he or she becomes totally drained of IT or CO (that is, becomes insane or dies); if he or she should perish for any reason, the Vase will begin to affect a random individual within its sphere of influence.

7.8.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to hunt down Goromil's band and put an end to their tomb-robbing. Depending on whether the characters are approached by Zimrakhil, they may also include the recovery of the Vase of Dreams among their objectives.

STARTING THE CHARACTERS

There are three possible starting points for this adventure. Characters involved with Cirator's supply network in Osgiliath may still have dealings with Goromil's men and might decide to trail Saeros back to Minas Anor (see Section 6.6). Characters who participated in the Council of Gondor may have been appointed by the King to lead the search for the tomb-robbers or they may be privately approached by Zimrakhil to locate the Vase of Dreams (see Section 7.7). Finally, characters who have not been played through either of these adventures, but who are in Minas Anor when Castamir announces a reward for their capture, may elect to do their own detective work and hopefully reap the reward.

As for motivation, the promise of reward (and prestige) for bringing the robbers to justice should be attractive enough in itself. Alternately, some of the characters may have had a family crypt desecrated and looted by Goromil's men, giving them a personal motivation for revenge against the defilers and recovery of lost property. Characters native to Minas Anor who have a grudge against Goromil might try to find damning evidence to get rid of an enemy or a competitor.

AIDS

What clues are available to the characters will depend largely on their point of entry into the adventure. Those with an official mandate will find easy access to the guarded city and its royal hallows. In Osgiliath, Parmandil the loremaster may be an important source for information about the theft of Ciryatan's tomb and the events leading up to it (see Section 6.6). Cirator may prove an even more valuable contact, since he has actually worked with Goromil's men and might betray them—for a price (see Section 6.4.4).

In Minas Anor, Goromil may very well have some enemies—in the Goldsmiths' Fellowship or the underworld—ready to malign his name. They may not be aware of the nature of his clandestine activities, but they will probably be able to name one or two of the shady characters he associates with (for example, Saeros or Harmandil). Zimrakhil, however, will not be of much assistance since he knows nothing about the robbers themselves, except in describing the object they are looking for.

OBSTACLES

In the course of their investigation, the characters may encounter Côr Aran agents or even other criminal elements who are on the same trail, eager to claim the honor of exposing the defilers themselves. Shadowing the movements of Saeros may be difficult if characters lack an entry permit for Osgiliath (see Section 6.3).

OUTCOMES

Any character who can give proof of having apprehended the defilers (or who has provided incriminating evidence leading to their capture) may expect rich reward and considerable prestige to result (assuming that such benefactors make public their deed). Anyone caught withholding artifacts stolen from the hallows will be slain on sight without legal proceedings. Zimrakhil may be able to secure some immunity for those who carry out Goromil's treasures, as long as he believes that they have found the Vase of Dreams.

Characters who obtain the Vase, but refuse to surrender it to the sorcerer will become the object of his malice. He may simply try to convince the authorities that they are making off with Goromil's loot, and so are criminals themselves, or he may send Belphegor his enforcer to obtain the Vase from them by violence. If Zimrakhil succeeds in acquiring the Vase, the gamemaster must decide whether or not he also succeeds in using it to get Mórdulin killed (an event of great political consequence). Alternately, inquisitive characters might shadow the sorcerer and attempt to thwart his designs themselves.

7.8.5 ENCOUNTERS

The methods of the tomb-robbers must first be uncovered before the flow of stolen goods can be traced to Saeros, Harmandil, and ultimately Goromil. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways, but characters will most likely be constrained to rely on subtlety rather than violent coercion—bribing, intimidating, or shadowing suspects for days in order to catch them in the act.

Goromil sells the spoils of his grave-plundering racket in Minas Anor. Valuable grave-goods such as jewelry and weapons are stolen in Osgiliath by the robbers Amdir, Neldorn, and Ringmir. The merchant Saeros regularly travels between Minas Anor and Minas Ithil, dealing in wool and cloth. He usually crosses the Anduin by ferry near Osgiliath and meets the grave-robbers at a suitable inn, receiving the loot and hiding it in his bales.

No one in Osgiliath knows exactly what the robbers are doing, but several of their acquaintances know or suspect that they are up to something illegal. Items that Goromil judges unlikely to be recognized are sold as soon as possible while objects that are too easily identifiable are melted down for their gold and silver or otherwise made unrecognizable. Magic items are hoarded by Goromil.

8.0 MINAS ITHIL

Minas Ithil is the largest urban center east of the Anduin. Its original foundation was destroyed by Sauron in the war of the Last Alliance, but rebuilt by Isildur to guard the pass of Cirith Dúath and to serve as the seat for his ward. It has maintained that status over the centuries, despite Isildur's death and the lack of heirs, though it has never enjoyed the royal honors of its sister-city in Anórien. With the enlargement of the hosts of the South-kingdom, Minas Ithil has also become the garrison for the King's eastern army.

The Usurper rules Minas Ithil through force and terror alone. Without the swords of his garrison, Castamir's control of the city would be measured in days or even hours. The vitality of the city's wool trade, essential to the livelihood of so many in Minas Ithil, has suffered considerably as a result of the Kin-strife. The severance of their export markets in Osgiliath and Rhovanion has generated economic hardship for the populace, destroying any loyalty that might have developed towards the new King.

8.1 A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Much of Ithilien remains untouched by the Kin-strife; only two sections of it—the Emyn Arnen and North Ithilien—have suffered from the war. The hills of Emyn Arnen were ravaged between 1433 and 1437, forcing many to abandon their homes. The hills are still dotted with ruined forts, hastily erected and brutally assaulted during those savage years. Many who chose to oppose the new King (or who were simply on the run) took refuge in the rugged hills and woods of North Ithilien. These have become a breeding ground for numerous rebel bands that continue to resist the Usurper, whose troops are spread too thinly to crush these dissidents once and for all.

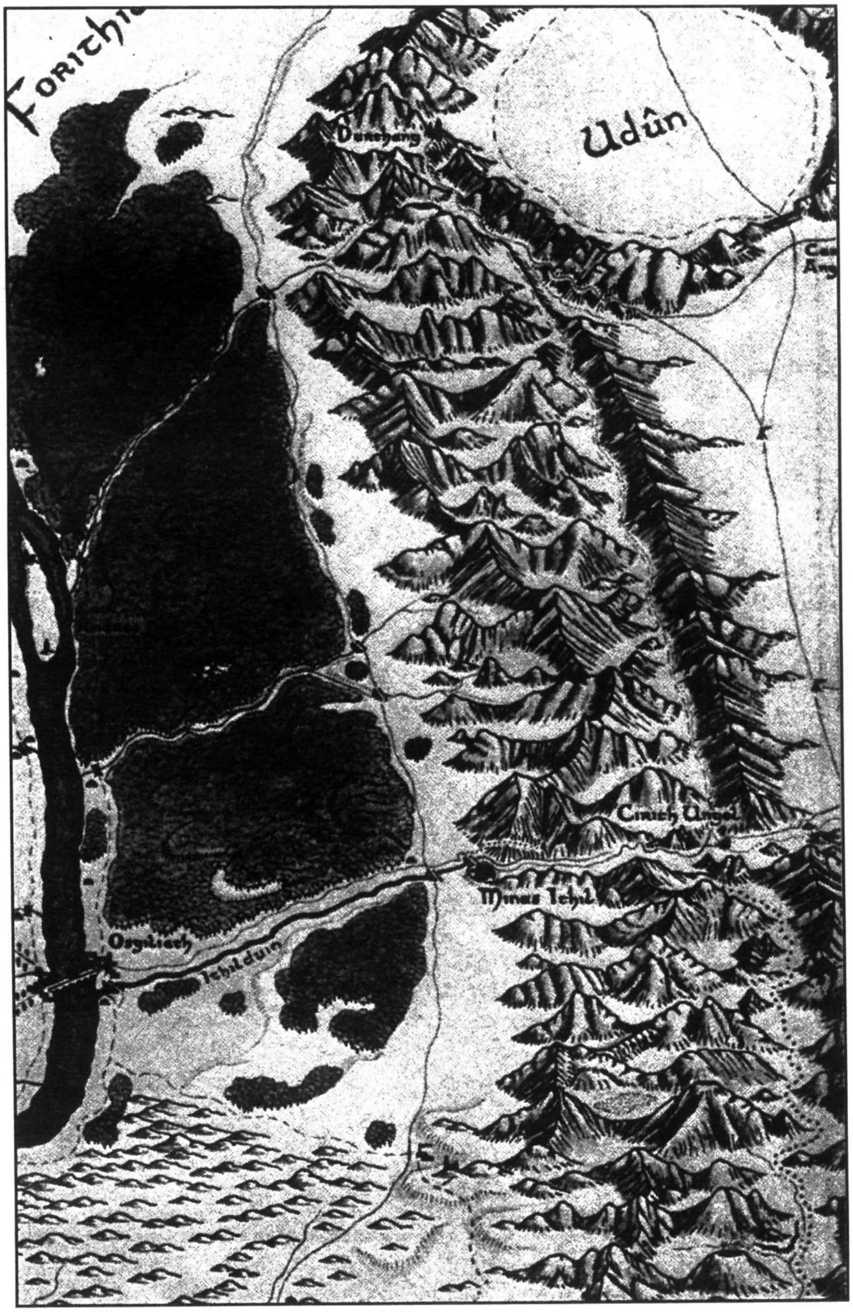
Sheep rearing in North Ithilien is the basis of the wool-trade of Minas Ithil, and the disruption of this industry by the fighting has caused severe economic depression in the region. The situation in fertile South Ithilien, "the garden of Gondor," is less severe, but many of its inhabitants are secretly loyal to Eldacar and support loyalist groups with supplies and information. Such dissidence has led the King to station a mercenary contingent to patrol the countryside, whose depredations have only alienated the populace further.

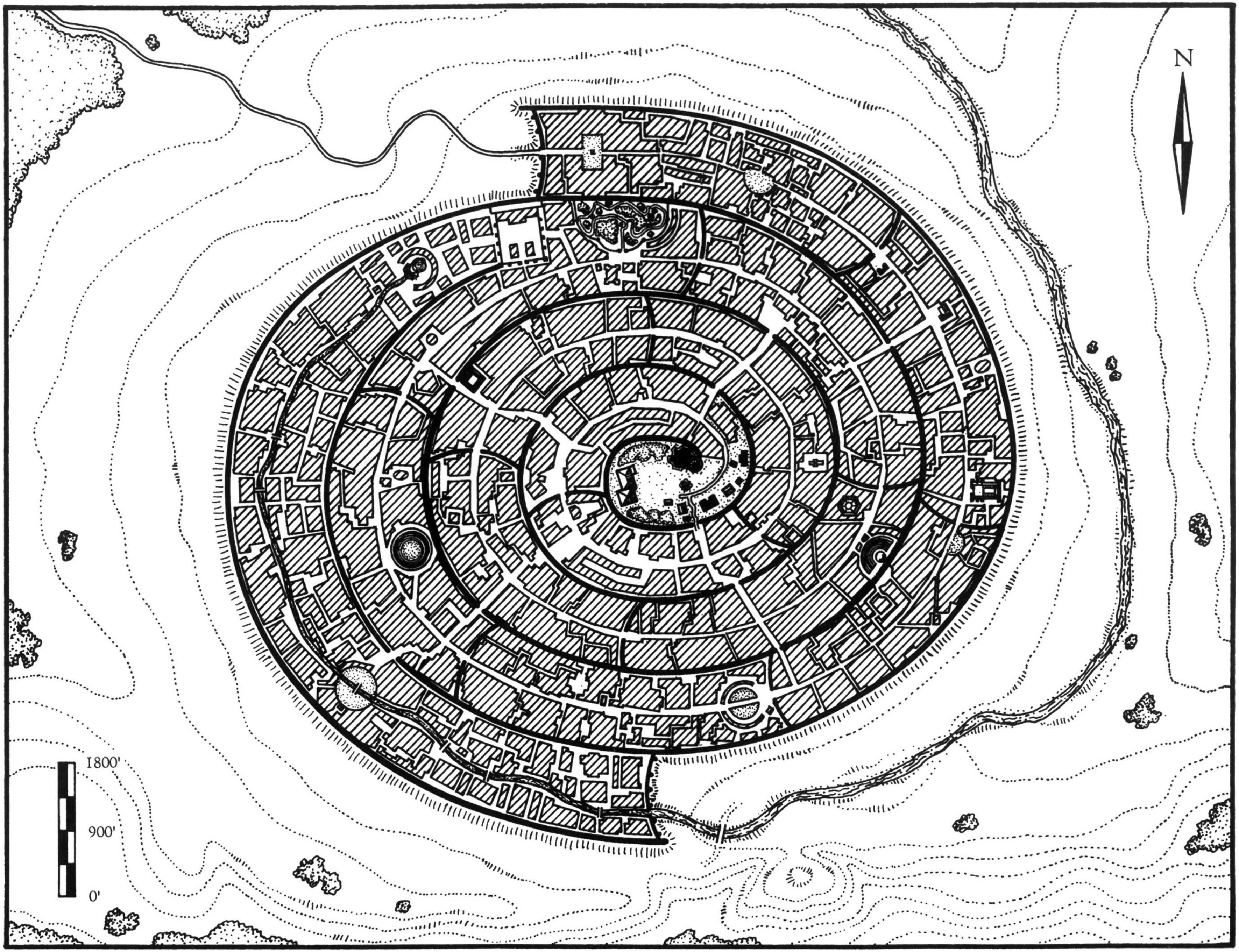
8.1.1 THE MORANNON

(GARRISON 2,200)

The host of North Ithilien garrisons the twin towers of Carchost and Narchost that guard the entrance to Mordor on the edge of the Dagorlad. As the furthest extent of the Usurper's dominion in the North, the Morannon bars Eldacar's way into Gondor. Eldacar lacks the necessary means to besiege the towers, and any company advancing into Ithilien could be easily cut off by its garrison.

The Morannon garrison is directly subordinated to Castamir through Othir Valandil, who is independent of other commanders in Ithilien. Although he is expected to cooperate with Steward Heruvorn in opposing the King's enemies, the lack of coordination between the two has opened a window for the clever rebel leaders which they have not hesitated to exploit.

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Valandil's garrison maintains a force of eighteen hundred line infantry from Lebennin and a company of four hundred Southron archers, whose task is to patrol the uninhabited lands between the Morannon and the Great River. Anyone attempting to cross this expanse must evade either these soldiers or their compatriots who are stationed in Minas Anor (see Section 7.3.2). Because the Ithilien Road is considered unsafe, the Morannon garrison is supplied by boats from Pelargir that take haven on the east bank of Anduin at Nindalf.

8.2 THE CITY LAYOUT

Built atop a low hill, much of Minas Ithil is overshadowed by the lower spurs of Mount Celebras, which rises from the basalt shelf of Lad Mithond. During the latter part of the Kin-strife, a defensive earthen rampart (known to the inhabitants as "Castamir's Folly") was raised on the edge of this plain. The winding path of Men Tumuial leads up to the main entrance into the city—the Twilight Gates.

A gift from Durin IV, these gates are forged of eighteen inch-thick steel, and are thirty feet in height. The city walls are scarcely less impressive, rising one hundred feet from a seventy foot-wide base that gradually narrows to twenty feet wide at the top. Its towers rise a hundred and thirty feet. The city walls and all other fortifications are kept in good repair.

The proportion of old but well-kept houses is greater now than in later years. Many were destroyed in the great fire of 1630, or decayed after having been abandoned during the Plague in 1636. The population, regularly swelled by a mass of up to four thousand refugees, is divided within the walls into four distinct quarters: the Queen's Quarter, the Quarter of Coins, the Quarter of Wells, and the Quarter of Shadow.

The Queen's Quarter

This is the political and architectural center of Minas Ithil. Most nobles and wealthy merchants reside here in palatial mansions surrounded by trees and fountains. The few shops located in this quarter are notably more expensive than those spread throughout the rest of the city.

The Quarter of Coins

This is the commercial center of the city, containing most shops, guildhouses, and businesses of many different kinds. The Quarter of Coins is just inside the Gates of Twilight and is thus the first part of Minas Ithil which a traveler sees. Most of its buildings are old but well-kept.

The Quarter of Wells

Situated along the course of Rivil, the Quarter of Wells has a mixed character. Many merchants and tradesmen live here, but it is also the home of the city's loremasters and artisans. Its buildings are not as impressive as those of the Queen's Quarter, but are nevertheless large and well-built. Many are either old palaces, abandoned by noble families who have moved to the Queen's Quarter, or newly built within the last century. The Quarter of Wells is beginning to loose its status as one of the more prosperous areas of Minas Ithil.

The Quarter of Shadow

The poorer inhabitants of the city live in this quarter which, though its houses are simpler than elsewhere and somewhat over-crowded, is by no means a slum. Sanitation is noticeably worse here than in other parts of Minas Ithil and in some areas criminal activity is quite common.

8.2.1 INTERESTING LOCALITIES

1. Rivil. This stream issues from a pool close to the Tirithos and runs through a stone-cut channel; it leaves the city by means of a short tunnel.

2. Rath Miraelin (S. Street of Sparkling Pools). The main street of Minas Ithil winds between the Twilight Gates and the Tower of the Moon in a great spiral. It is paved with white Anórien marble and lined with statues, trees, fountains and stately houses.

3. The Tatharond (S. Willow Hall). The university of Minas Ithil. It is closed at present on orders of the Steward, since several scholars have denounced the Usurper's policies in their lectures.

4. The Library. This is still open, but gaining entry requires a special permit that is (rarely) granted by the Steward's office.

5. The Council Hall. This old, imposing building is heavily guarded since almost all non-military government functions are performed here. Outsiders are always accompanied by an armed escort.

6. The Tirithos. The fortress and barracks of the city garrison. It lacks space enough to house the three thousand soldiers of its swollen garrison and some of the overflow is quartered in confiscated private homes or warehouses. The fortress serves other functions as well: prisoners are kept in its dungeons and the city treasury is stored here.

7. The Market Place. According to many, this is the true heart of Minas Ithil. Most city dwellers buy their daily food here, and many other wares are available as well. Even with the disruption caused by the war, the market is a cosmopolitan place where the tongues of many lands may be heard.

8. The Steward's Palace. Heruvorn's residence is an imposing building, designed to intimidate the viewer. It is a new structure, being built between 1433 and 1434. Given Heruvorn's lack of popularity, a large guard of trustworthy troops is always posted here.

8.2.2 THE TOWER OF THE MOON

Rising above all other buildings, the slender spire of the Tower of the Moon is visible throughout the city. Constructed of delicate white marble, the tower is nevertheless one of the strongest works of Elendil's sons. It rises two hundred and twenty feet above an artificial mound, itself seventy-five feet high.

The intricate ornaments on its surface fail to show even a fraction of the wear one would expect from the passage of fourteen centuries. Its central spire rises smoothly from the companion towers at its flanks, culminating in the Chamber of the Palantír, above which is an observation platform also used for signaling. On clear nights the light from its main lantern may be seen as far as Osgiliath.

Paradoxically, this marvelous structure stands almost unused. Heruvorn the Steward has an apartment here, but spends little time in it. Perhaps the tower's main function is psychological, reminding the citizens of a better time that may come again—*aurë entuluva!*

8.2.3 THE SHANTYTOWN

(POPULATION: 4,000)

Minas Ithil shares the burden of Osgiliath's diaspora with its sister city, and a haphazard Shantytown has been established just north of the Twilight Gates. Its impoverished inhabitants live a miserable life, earning a meager income as day laborers or petty criminals. Unlike the Conclave, the Steward of Minas Ithil displays no charity toward the refugees; some wealthy citizens have shown more generosity, however, by making an effort to ease the lives of the Shantytown poor. The healers of Minas Anor have established a small house here (see Section 8.7.3).

8.3 CITY AUTHORITIES

As the center of its ward, Minas Ithil is the property of the King; however, since the royal court is never actually held in Ithilien, the Steward has become a permanent authority. In practice, this makes the whole of Ithilien a fief of the Steward's household, but Castamir has broken with this tradition by appointing a Lebennin officer to rule this unstable domain. This Steward is Heruvorn.

Castamir has strengthened the authority of the Stewardship, bestowing upon the office dictatorial prerogatives over the city's inhabitants. Heruvorn is probably the most hated man in Minas Ithil, and several of his subordinates compete for second place. Loathed by the populace and unsure of the loyalty of his own men, Heruvorn's rule is characterized by paranoia and violence.

The Usurper himself does not completely trust him, and at least one Côr Aran agent has been assigned to keep watch over the Steward. Nevertheless, Heruvorn retains the full powers of his office, referring only the most serious cases of treason to the King's adjudication. The lower echelons of Heruvorn's administration are riddled with corruption and intrigue, and large-scale "sweeps" undertaken by the garrison against the rebels are often thwarted by a loose tongue.

8.3.1 THE GARRISON

(3,000 SOLDIERS)

Even though all troops in Minas Ithil are recruited from provinces loyal to the Usurper or from abroad, Castamir frequently rotates them to other posts, fearing that the rebellious mood of the city will infect them. The garrison is large enough to control the city and the main roads, but not the countryside. It is typically based upon a regular force confined to the city walls of eight hundred line infantry from the coastal provinces. It is supported by three hundred Haradan archers, a mounted force of two hundred infantry from the lower Anduin vale, two hundred Southron cavalry, and an anti-rebel force of two thousand light infantry and three hundred slingers from Dunfearan.

Rivalry among the different units is intense, and fatalities are not unknown to the tavern brawls that occur on a regular basis. The Dúnadan units in particular look askance at the mercenaries, whose commanders frequently have their own agendas and feel no particular loyalty to Castamir, beyond satisfying the hand that feeds them. A typical city patrol consists of four or five men, which is doubled when they are expecting trouble. Outside the walls, soldiers always move in groups of at least twenty.

8.4 THE INHABITANTS

(POPULATION 36,000)

8.4.1 THE ELITE

The events of the Kin-strife have placed the landowning nobility of Ithilien in an ambiguous position. The Usurper's neglect for the well-being of the land has alienated many families from their property, and those who escaped confiscation through open alliance with the confederates are threatened with a loss of prestige in the eyes of the people. As a result of their dilemma, the nobility are viewed is trusted neither by Heruvorn nor the populace.

Unrest in the countryside has been economically disruptive for several families, whose herds and fields frequently fall prey to the depredations of rebels and soldiers alike. As a result of this anarchy, many tenants have abandoned the lands of their patrons to join the rebels. In some cases, younger nobles or sons of nobles with little to lose have also fled into the wilderness of North Ithilien to fight the current powers. House Telagar alone has profited from the Usurper's reign—their vast herds of horses are in greater demand than ever. This has made them unpopular with less fortunate families such as the Corvagin, Curocdíli, Rian and Aludor.

8.4.2 THE GUILDS

The Usurper has typically found ready alliance and cooperation with economic power throughout his realm, but the nature of Ithilien's economy and the disruption it experienced as a result of the Kin-strife have left many guilds in Minas Ithil markedly opposed to Castamir's rule, affording little ground for collaboration with Heruvorn or his staff.

Factionalism and ancient rivalries have prevented the guilds from forging a united front against the Usurper's men, but their continued influence and power in the city makes it necessary for Heruvorn to seek their support against the nobility. Yet even were he willing to implement legal measures in their favor, the Steward could not hope to win their continued friendship, given the necessity of maintaining the embargo on their principal markets. This is particularly true of the Weavers' Guild, who see only one solution to their problem: the reopening of trade with Osgiliath and Rhovanion at any cost.

8.4.3 THE COMMONERS

The principal reason for the Usurper's lack of popularity among the common folk of Minas Ithil are the economic hardships resulting from his rule. The general standard of living has fallen due to inflation, scarcity of certain foodstuffs, and increased taxation. Because commoners who express their outrage at this situation pay dearly for it, popular resistance to Castamir and his representatives is generally limited to muttering a curse beneath one's breath and returning to the business at hand. This inertia is less characteristic among the poor, who have less to lose.

8.4.4 NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

Steward Heruvorn (1364-1447†)

The Steward of Minas Ithil comes from a minor noble family of Lebennin, but lacks every quality associated with nobility, owing his exalted position to bribery, blackmail, and a (seemingly) unwavering loyalty to Castamir. Heruvorn is dedicated to preserving his appointment, and the lives of subjects or even his own men are of no consequence in this matter. He is not, however, stupid and knows when to feign friendship or respect.

Heruvorn is middle-aged, a bit overweight, and a little bald. He lives in constant fear of assassination, and usually wears a chainmail hauberk of excellent quality and half the normal encumbrance (+15) beneath his gold-embroidered tunics and cloaks (which gives him the appearance of being slightly overdressed). On all public and most private occasions, he is accompanied by at least four Daen bodyguards.

Captain Karan (1403-1441†)

Like his comrade in Minas Anor, the commander of Minas Ithil's Southron cavalry is the younger son of a warlord from Near Harad, who left home to seek his fortune as a military adventurer. He has served the Captain of Ships as a mercenary for nearly twenty years, and has proven his bravery and skill on numerous occasions. Karan finds garrison duty unsatisfying, possessed as he is of an inflated impression of his own worth and a lust for action and plunder.

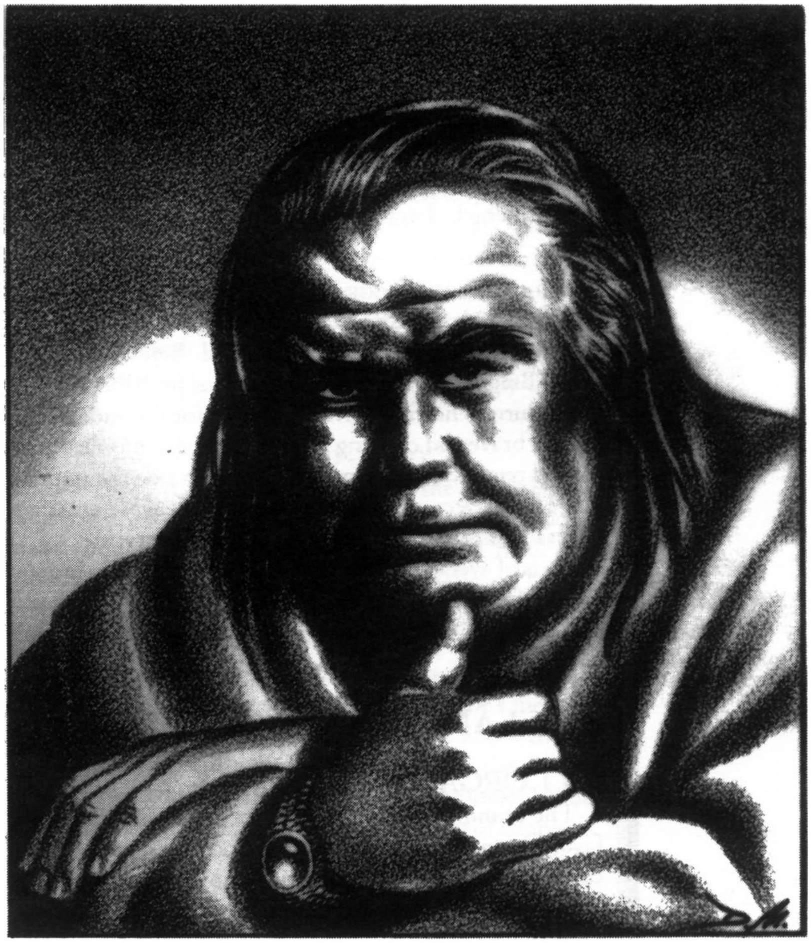
Karan is desperate for an assignment to the Morannon, and hopes to win this as a reward for defeating and capturing some notorious traitor or rebel leader (believing that such a feat would attract favorable attention from the Usurper or one of his captains). If he cannot find a genuine rebel leader, anyone who looks the part will do. He has not revealed his intentions to anyone else, desiring to claim all the glory for himself (see Section 6.6.1).

Karan is fairly tall for a Southron and has a slender, sinewy build. He has brown eyes, black hair, and a short beard. His arms and armor are of excellent quality (+10) and are always kept in the best condition.

Hador (1398-1447†)

Hador is the Côr Aran chief of Minas Ithil. He was born in a Pelargir family with a long naval tradition. He joined the navy as a youngster and quickly displayed his competence. During the first years of the Kin-strife, he worked on intelligence matters in Castamir's Pelargir headquarters.

When Castamir had seized the throne, he personally intervened to have Hador appointed to his current Minas Ithil position. The King correctly believed that the officer would be able to skillfully lead the Côr Aran operations in this important city.



Steward Heruvorn

Hador is a sincere traditionalist. He believes that the necessities of the current situation warrant measures that usually would be against the ideals of the Faithful. In this he resembles his King, and that is perhaps why they cooperate so well.

Hador is a tall and muscular man, whose face has been darkened by sun and sea. The brown eyes are penetrating. His hair is still chestnut brown with no trace of grey. The straight back and stiff manners betray his military background. However, when with friends in a tavern (a rare event nowadays), Hador is a jocular man skilled in lute-playing. Hador is not likely to be encountered on the streets, since he leads the operation from behind his desk. He prefers to keep a low profile; in fact, very few know his true occupation.

HERION (1416-1521)

Herion is a young scholar originally trained as a historian, but is fairly skilled in several other disciplines as well. He has become an unwitting agent of the Enemy, believing that he works for a loyalist group called Forgil. He has been told that other loyalist groups are motivated by greed and selfishness and hence unreliable. Only Forgil can lead the fight against Castamir. (This policy is, of course, designed to ensure conflict among the rebels. Should Forgil succeed in uniting the loyalists, so much the better.) Herion has only seen his Forgil contact once (when he was recruited), otherwise communicating by coded letters.

Herion is tall, dark-haired and brown eyed. He dresses as a scholar, preferring blue and black. He is arrogant and convinced of the excellence of his own opinions and actions, which detracts from his value as an undercover agent.

BREGOR (1405-1468)

Bregor is the leader of a small rebel group operating in the countryside north of Minas Ithil. Before the Kin-strife, Bregor was a peasant, but it is improbable he will ever return to his farm, given his liking for the outlaw life. He is a brave and cunning fighter, though somewhat vain for his reputation and inclined to over-value the importance of his accomplishments. Bregor will avoid entering Minas Ithil, feeling much safer in the countryside.

He is of average height, muscular and fit, and has brown hair and gray eyes. He has a dagger scar on his forehead and is always armed with a broadsword and several daggers.

8.5 CLANDESTINE GROUPS

8.5.1 ORGANIZED CRIME

The criminals of Minas Ithil are among the few who favor Heruvorn's administration, since its current preoccupation with chasing spies and traitors turns attention away from domestic forms of illegality. Widespread corruption in the civil and military structure also facilitates criminal activity. The Steward has, in fact, attempted to establish contact with certain criminal elements, as he does not completely trust the Côr Aran and seeks to build up his own network of spies. Some of the rebels were outlaws even before the Kin-strife and, consequently, are able to call upon former associates in the underworld.

8.5.2 LOYALIST GROUPS

Eldacar's supporters face great difficulties when operating within the walls of Minas Ithil, since its garrison and the Côr Aran hold the city in an iron grip; loyalist activities are therefore limited to spying and discreet propaganda. Heruvorn has placed bounties on the heads of all rebels and has promised a pardon for any rebel who betrays his leader. Loyalists are accordingly suspicious of strangers, since any unknown individual may be a betrayer.

In rural Ithilien the situation is quite different. Much of the rugged countryside of North Ithilien is under direct rebel control, and raids on isolated military posts and other government installations are commonplace. These rebels are only sporadically in touch with loyalist groups in other provinces and almost never contact representatives of Eldacar. Getting supplies are less problematic in this fertile area than in many other places, allowing the group to live off the land without relying upon outside resources. The need for stealth and internal discipline generally limits the size of such groups to between twenty and forty men, though on occasion the rebels have operated in units of several hundred fighters.

8.5.3 THE CÔR ARAN

Hador, a former navy commander, has been appointed head of all Côr Aran operations in Minas Ithil. He has a discreet office at Heruvorn's headquarters, pretending to deal solely with the rebel problem outside the city. Hador is not under the Steward's command, but he is expected to keep him informed on the organization's discoveries.

The Nest has inserted one or two Crow teams into Minas Ithil outside Hador's jurisdiction. He knows of their existence, but has not informed the Steward. This enables the Côr Aran to monitor certain of Heruvorn's activities without his knowledge.

The Côr Aran operations are fairly well run, mostly due to Hador's competence and ability to keep Heruvorn from meddling. However, the organization has so far been unable to deal effectively with the rural rebels. Their groups have proven hard to infiltrate.

8.5.4 SERVANTS OF THE ENEMY

Adûnaphel has exploited the demand among the Weavers' Guild and others to recruit informants for fictive resistance or infiltration groups that will be manipulated by spies from Lugarlûr. These plants lead their unsuspecting contacts to believe that they work in the service of Eldacar, the Usurper, another guild, or some other likely candidate organization. The value of infiltration in Minas Ithil is limited by the amount of time required for messengers to reach Harondor, at which point information is often no longer up to date.

8.6 ADVENTURE: SPIES AT THE TOWER OF THE MOON

In his exile, Eldacar has a limited knowledge of loyalist activity in Ithilien. He wants to establish contact with resistance groups in Minas Ithil, and has sent his spymaster to recruit some proven loyalists for the task. Unbeknownst to Eldacar, this information is largely inaccurate or out of date, as his spies are soon to discover.

8.6.1 A TALE OF INCORRECT INTELLIGENCE

According to the exiled King's intelligence gatherers, there are two possible loyalist contacts in Minas Ithil: Boron, a member of the Brewers' Guild, who sometimes supplies the rebels, and Falathar, a librarian at the Tatharond, known for his loyalist sentiments. Recently, however, the Crows (particularly Ragnor) have noticed the contacts between Boron and various rebel groups. The Crows set a trap by capturing Boron's family, thus forcing him to obey them rather than risk his family's torture and death. The Côr Aran hope to ensnare any rebels attempting to contact their former supplier at his house and lie in wait with a company of soldiers on call.

Falathar, on the other hand, is under the influence of a would-be loyalist who unwittingly acts as an informant for Dol Guldur, and, thus, may not prove very useful to genuine spies. The real resistance leaders in Minas Ithil are far more difficult to contact, and are hunted by predators other than the Côr Aran. Derufin, a dishonest innkeeper, tries to attract such groups in order to collect the bounties placed on their heads by the Steward. Karan, the Southron cavalry commander, has similar plans.

8.6.2 THE NPCS

MAGOR

Magor does not know very much about either Falathar or Boron and cannot recommend any particular method of contacting them. He will stress the need for absolute secrecy—the Côr Aran must be kept in the dark about the loyalist spy network at all costs. Magor will provide money for supplies, traveling expenses, bribes, and other reasonable mission expenses. (See Section 2.2.7 for more details.)

BORON (1401-1473)

Boron is a wealthy brewer of Minas Ithil who sometimes aids the rebels with supplies and information. He genuinely feels Eldacar to be the rightful heir, but also opposes Castamir because he finds the new King's policies bad for business. Nevertheless, Boron is a cautious man, and would never risk his personal safety or that of his family for the sake of his ideals.

Boron is of medium height and chubby. His hair and eyes are brown. He is dressed as the well-to-do merchant and behaves somewhat pompously, a habit acquired during a long career of bossing other at his brewery. Boron will be nervous and distracted as long as his family remains hostages to the Crows.

FALATHAR (1375-1502)

Falathar is a librarian of the Tatharond who is deeply opposed to Castamir and all he stands for. Although highly intelligent, Falathar is an otherworldly man with little understanding of political struggle. His colleagues have been able to keep him out of trouble with the Côr Aran, who regard Falathar with suspicion but do not yet consider him dangerous enough to merit surveillance. He will do almost anything to prevent harm to his niece Aerin, but is otherwise very difficult to motivate (except for conversation or the rearrangement of his library). He has no real contacts with the rebels in Minas Ithil or Ithilien.

Falathar is tall and thin with fairly long gray hair and pale blue eyes, though he is younger than most people think him. He lacks common sense and social grace.

HERION

Herion tries to keep an eye on loyalist and traditionalist activities in Minas Ithil for Forgil. Falathar and Aerin are not ideal for infiltrating the loyalists, a fact that Herion has only begun to notice. He will try to betray characters to the Crows but does not, in fact, know how to bring this about. His fear of implicating Aerin (whom he genuinely cares about) will cause him to act nervous and make mistakes (such as dropping or misplacing the anonymous letter he writes and plans to bring to the Steward's office). (See Section 8.4.4 for more details.)

AERIN (1410-1525)

Aerin is Falathar's niece and ward. She is a woman obsessed with Gondor's glorious past, an interest which provided a way for Herion to approach her uncle. Aerin is only slightly more in touch with the real world than her Falathar. She is somewhat suspicious of loyalist organizations and thinks that guerrilla warfare is a waste of time (besides having an uncomfortable similarity to banditry).

Aerin is tall and slender, with dark hair and blue eyes; her age is difficult to judge. While engaged in conversation on her favorite subject, she is overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

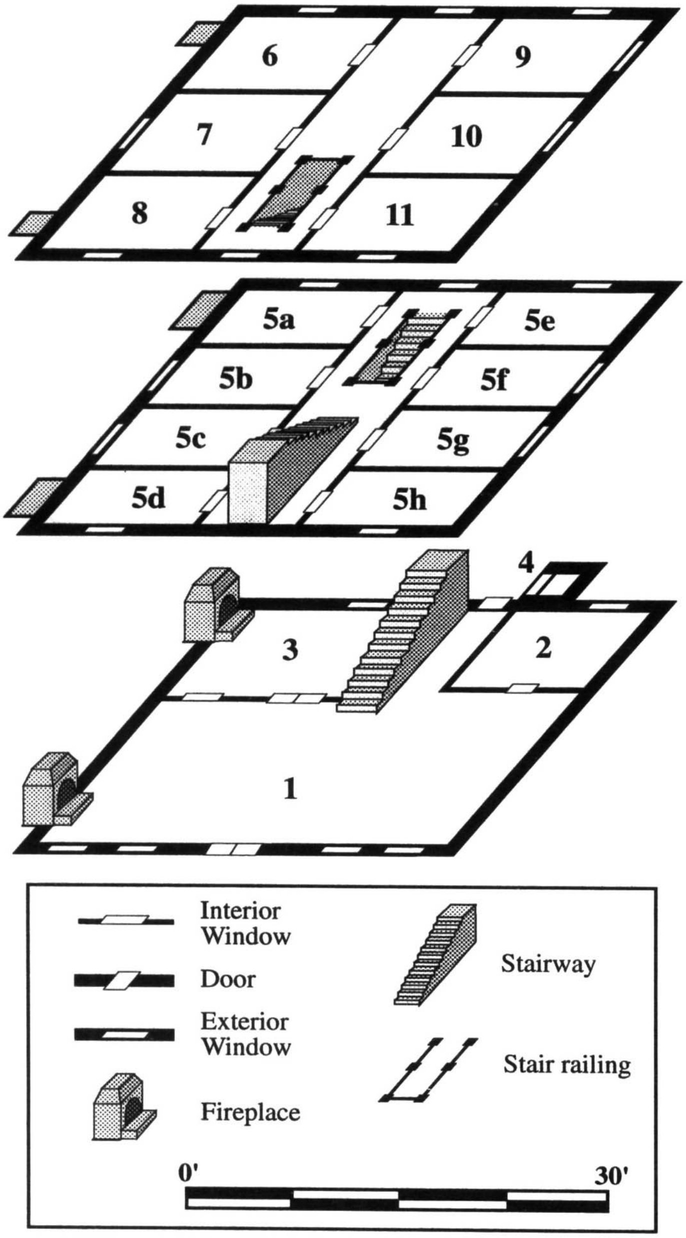
FINDEGIL (1387-1469)

Findegil is second-in-command to the rebel leader Bregor (see Section 8.4.4). He has been given the task of maintaining friendly contacts inside Minas Ithil. He gathers information from various sources, such as Míriel or corrupt soldiers, and is a good judge of character. Before the Kin-strife, Findegil had been a shepherd who was driven to outlawry after his entire family was massacred by Castamir's troops. Like most of Bregor's men, he is loyal to his chief—but not fanatically so, and if things go very badly he will run rather than fight to the death.

Findegil is a quiet, grave man who does not look like the skillful fighter he really is. He is more trusting of strangers than Míriel or Bregor. Tall and thin, he wears his graying blond hair long, presenting an unkempt appearance. He wears simple peasant clothing and a large, floppy hat. His favorite weapon is the spear, but on his city visits he only carries a hidden shortsword to avoid attracting attention.

Míriel (1427-1483)

Míriel is a young beggar of Minas Ithil who provides Findegil with information. Vengeance for her brother's murder at the hands of Heruvorn's mercenaries has driven Míriel to undertake almost any action against the Steward, though she is intelligent enough to realize that revenge upon so great an enemy will take time. Míriel also sees through Derufin's charade and avoids contact with the conniving innkeeper. Míriel has warned Findegil and Bregor that something is wrong in Boron's household and neither will approach the brewer's house.



Míriel is short and scrawny with short brown hair and green eyes. She wears a dirty, ragged dress and a shawl, and generally goes barefoot. A concealed dagger is strapped to her left forearm beneath the sleeve. Míriel is unimpressed by fair words and has respect only for those prepared to oppose the Usurper's men with deeds.

Derufin (1398-1475)

Derufin is a retired soldier and proprietor of The Green Candle, a somewhat run-down inn in the Quarter of Shadows. Derufin is a fairly good innkeeper, and The Candle's fare provides quite good value for money. He likes to pretend (discreetly, of course) that he has extensive contacts among the loyalists, and that he is personally acquainted with several noted rebel leaders. In fact, this is a front designed to get some real rebels to contact him, so that he can collect the bounty money. Many of his customers are taken in by this imposture.

Derufin has a scarred face and a muscular physique. He is tall with thinning brown hair and blue eyes. He keeps an iron-shod cudgel beneath the bar and his old broadsword (+5) in his room.

Ragnor (1407-1486)

Ragnor is one of the principal Côr Aran operatives in Minas Ithil. He is an enigma even to his colleagues, a loner who is attracted to intrigue and skullduggery for their own sake rather than for what they accomplish. A skillful actor and disguise-artist, Ragnor often operates undercover, sometimes for months at a time. While he is a good fighter, he prefers more subtle methods of accomplishing his aims and generally uses violence only in self-defense. Ragnor (who, in one of his disguises—Hithluin—is among Derufin's regular customers) does not believe a word the innkeeper says.

When not in disguise, Ragnor is nondescript, in his middle thirties, of medium height and build with pale brown hair and grey eyes. He always carries several concealed daggers about his person. These look like simple, well-worn weapons but all are good quality (+10).

Varak (1403-1447†)

Varak is another Côr Aran disguise artist, who sometimes poses as a rebel leader in the hopes of attracting other loyalists. He is trusted among the Crows of Minas Ithil and is one of the few who is accorded professional respect by Ragnor. Varak never hesitates to use violence or cruelty if it suits his purposes and is quite oblivious to the suffering of others (nonetheless, he can be patient and subtle in his actions). He is fond of elaborate and expensive clothes and good wines.

Varak is tall, muscular, and handsome, with black hair and a short beard. This is false—a "reverse disguise" he can shed if he is forced to assume another identity. When impersonating a rebel leader, he wears peasant garb (much to his disgust) and drinks beer. He owns a good broadsword (+5).

8.6.3 THE SETTINGS

The Green Candle

Originally built around T.A. 800, these building have all seen better days. They are kept reasonably clean and most of the inns and taverns of the Quarter of Shadow look a lot less inviting. Derufin bought it with the savings and plunder of his military career. His wife does most of the cooking and he employs two serving maids and a stable boy (For the cost of food, drink and lodging, see Section 10.1.1).

1. Common Room. The furniture here is worn, but not overly dirty.

2. Backroom. A smaller, more intimate version of the common room.

3. Kitchen.

4. Privy.

5a-h. Guest Bedrooms. Each contains two beds and a chair and is fairly clean.

6. Derufin's Room. This is (predictably) the least Spartan of the inn's rooms, with rugs on the floor, a carved hardwood table and other signs of affluence.

7. Bedroom. Used by the two serving maids. Similar to the guestrooms.

8. Bedroom. Used by the stable boy. Similar to the guestrooms.

9. Storeroom. Full of old broken-down furniture and other junk.

10. Storeroom. This room is normally kept locked and contains some souvenirs of Derufin's mercenary days (a chainmail hauberk, an Orc skull, and a Northman dagger) as well as his and his wife's best clothes.

11. Empty Room.

The Rampant Boar Inn

"The Standing Pig" (as it is known to its patrons) is one of the shabbiest, dirtiest, and cheapest inns in the city. Its prices are twenty percent lower than normal, but despite this it is never more than half full. The owner, Beriel, is an old woman who long ago started to inspect the contents of her own wine barrels all too intently. Any well-dressed or cultivated character will stand out like a sore thumb.

Falathar's House

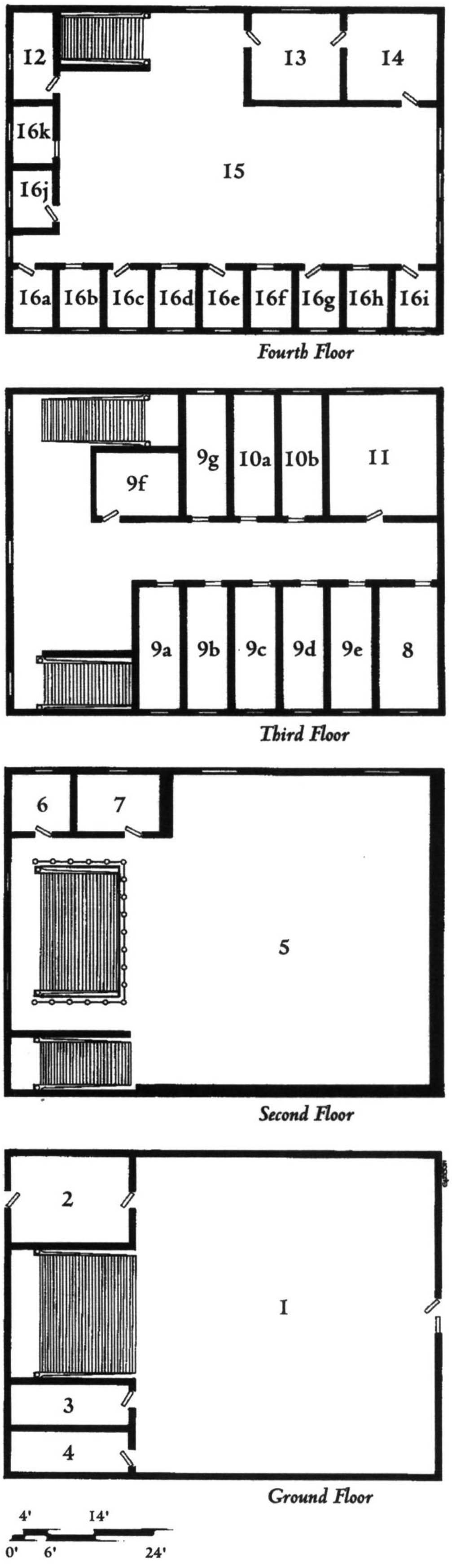
Falathar and Aerin live in an old, slightly run-down mansion in the Quarter of Wells. Neither of them takes much interest in its maintenance, being busy with their studies. They keep an aged couple as servants. Most of the rooms are empty. Only Falathar's library is kept in reasonable order, but even it seems to be constantly in the throes of a "reorganization."

Boron's House

Boron is quite wealthy and lives in a small palace. It is fairly new, built twenty years ago by Boron's father. Normally Boron has twelve servants. At present, four of these have been replaced by Crows. These are bored by the assignment and somewhat lax in their duties, as they think that this is too obvious a trap to catch one of the wily rebel leaders (and in this they are correct).

1. Entrance Hall. The walls and floor are covered by intricate, somewhat gaudy mosaics.

2. Watchroom. Normally not used, but it might be a good hiding place for soldiers or Crows during their ambush attempt.



Boron's house

3. Storeroom. Empty except for a ladder and a pile of old tapestries in one corner. There is a trapdoor in the floor leading to the cellar, where food, beer and wine is stored.
4. Privy.
5. Great Hall. Like the entrance hall this is somewhat over-decorated.
6. Auxiliary Kitchen. Used to keep food hot during feasts in the Great Hall.
7. Private Meeting Room. Sumptuously decorated in an imitation Southron style.
8. Boron's Bedroom. This, like all the bedrooms, is less decorated than the "public" rooms.
9a-g. Bedrooms. For members of the family (all presently empty).
10a-b. Guestrooms. These are dusty and unused for some years.
11. Library. This has no books of use to adventurers and is mostly for show.
12. Bathroom.
13. Main kitchen.
14. Storeroom. The shelves contain food and household utensils.
15. Servants' Dining Room.
16a-l. Servants' Bedrooms.

8.6.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to establish contact with the loyalist leadership of Minas Ithil and to form a correct estimate of the relative strengths and weaknesses of Castamir's and the rebels' forces in Ithilien. The obstacles hindering this goal reflect the brutality of the Usurper's reign, and insufficiently wary characters may well end up hanging from the gallows. The course of events is intended to illustrate the necessities and hazards of espionage and resistance operations, and those who escape these dangers will certainly have a better chance of survival in the continuing struggle against the Usurper.

Starting the Characters

This adventure presupposes that the player characters have proven their dedication to the loyalist cause to warrant being approached by Magor, the exiled King's spymaster, for the task (see Section 2.2.7). The meeting can take place almost anywhere, though Magor tends to operate in major cities—Minas Anor is perhaps the most likely place.

Aids

Characters may be assisted by Míriel and Findegil, if they gain the trust of these loyalists. (They might, for instance, stage some kind of diversion at The Green Candle if they have been able to ascertain the situation.) Otherwise, characters will be forced to rely on their own wits to avoid entanglement.

Obstacles

Derufin the innkeeper will attempt to betray the characters, and Karan will seek to capture them. Boron will be coerced into deceiving and betraying them to the Crows. Falathar and Aerin may also cause problems, as they tend to get in the way of things.

Outcomes

If any Gondorian soldiers and Crows survived the fight at The Green Candle, the Côr Aran will soon learn of the actions of the Southrons and will arrest Karan with all his officers, torturing them into confessing the extent of their "plot" (of which all, with the exception of Karan himself, are innocent); following the questioning the Southrons will be summarily hanged.

Any characters captured at The Green Candle will receive similar punishment, except those who confess to be Eldacar's agents—they will be sent the next day under heavy guard to Pelargir for "special treatment" by Caramir. There will be little opportunity for an emergency rescue, and both Findegil and Míriel will avoid any foolhardy attempts, cooperating only if presented with an apparently foolproof plan. They are more inclined to assassinate captured characters, in order to prevent them from breaking under torture.

Characters who have been able to gain his trust may accompany Findegil on his departure from Minas Ithil in the afternoon. About six miles north of the city, they will meet Bregor and his men, who may be able to provide vital assistance in future adventures.

8.6.5 ENCOUNTERS

The characters can meet people more or less randomly (patrolling soldiers for instance), in what only appears to be a random fashion (Míriel or Ragnor), or by their own choice (Falathar, Boron or Derufin). In general, the encounters should be presented slightly faster than the characters can deal with them to preserve an atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty, and to force the players to think on their feet. Encounters not having anything to do with the plot are also possible, for instance with pickpockets. The gamemaster must adjust the number of soldiers at Boron's house and at the Green Candle, depending on the strength of the characters and the preferred level of difficulty for the scenario.

If characters have not been acting very discreetly, both Míriel and Ragnor will approach them (she in her normal guise as a beggar, he in one of his disguises) to learn of their business in the city. If the characters act competently, no one will take any particular notice of them. Characters who have been neither clumsy nor lax in their inquiries should have heard about Derufin and his putative rebel contacts by Day 3.

Talking to Falathar and Aerin

If approached correctly (preferably by a well-educated and well-mannered character), Falathar and Aerin will greet the characters in a friendly but indecisive manner. Falathar will be almost totally useless as far as their mission is concerned. Unless the characters have been displaying unusual knowledge of, or interest in, ancient Gondorian history, Aerin will be distinctly less friendly to them than her uncle (due to Herion's influence).

Talking to Míriel

Míriel approaches the characters in the same manner as any other beggar, appealing to their pity for a few small coins. If possible, she tries to engage at least one character in conversation, for instance by hinting that she knows where to obtain black market wares. If the characters appear to be suspect, she follows them as discreetly as possible for an hour or two. She might also question other beggars about their activities. Even if the characters succeed in gaining her trust, she will tell them as little as possible about herself.

Meeting Ragnor

The following are Ragnor's common disguises: "Hithluin," an old and garrulous hunter who, for the price of a glass of beer, regales all and sundry with hair-raising tales of the incredible beasts and monsters that he has killed in his youth. Hithluin is often found at The Green Candle; "Anborn," a crazy beggar that wanders the streets, talking to himself and taking no notice of passers by; and "Haldan," a slightly dim-witted farmhand who sometimes comes to Minas Ithil to drink and gamble at the more disreputable taverns.

Meeting with Boron

Boron is away at a meeting of the Brewers' Guild on Day 1 and cannot be contacted for most of the day. Boron will be at home for the entirety of Day 2 and may be approached in any reasonable manner. He will direct inquiring characters to return the following day, so that the Crows will have proper time to prepare an ambush. Characters returning to Boron's house will be ambushed by the Crows and a group of soldiers who will attempt to capture them alive, refraining from lethal force unless absolutely necessary. Four Crows are stationed at Boron's house, masquerading as servants, and soldiers are ready to surround it on short notice (see Section 8.6.3).

Talking to Herion

If the characters have contacted Falathar and Aerin, Herion will arrange a meeting in order to form a personal opinion of them, after which he will denounce them to the Steward's Office by an anonymous letter. [The gamemaster decides when and if this letter is actually delivered.]

Herion introduces himself as a friend of Falathar's (which is true, after a fashion) and tries to get to know as much about the characters as possible: where they come from, what they are doing in Minas Ithil, and so on. He tells the characters anything they want about his own background (except his connection to Forgil), and may comment on the difficult situation of scholars in Minas Ithil since the university was closed and the authorities became opposed to "the true path of learning." Despite his best efforts, he appears to be somewhat stiff and arrogant.

Talking to Derufin

If the characters inquire about someone with rebel contacts, they are likely to be directed to Derufin. Derufin will do his best to appear as he thinks the characters expect a rebel to be—brave and idealistic, yet cautious. He will admit to knowing some loyalist leaders only if the characters are persistent in their inquiries. Doing his utmost to stress the need for absolute secrecy, he will appear to be slightly paranoid in a melodramatic fashion, issuing dire warnings about the Crows and so on.

He will not mention any concrete details about rebel activities—naturally enough, since he knows nothing about them. According to Derufin, Day 5 is the earliest date when he can arrange a meeting with a rebel representative (Varak) at his inn.

Findegil Arrives in the City (Day 3)

Findegil arrives in Minas Ithil on one of his periodical information-gathering visits, lodging at The Rampant Boar Inn. The next morning he will meet with Míriel who may warn Findegil about the characters if they have been acting suspicious. Findegil and Míriel will take notice of the strange behavior of the Southron troops that day and tail them to The Green Candle.

Karan Positions his Men (Day 4)

Karan sends some of his most trusted soldiers to The Green Candle and Rampant Boar in an effort to trap a rebel leader. They are not immediately noticeable, since the Southrons act like ordinary soldiers on leave (though they will be less drunk than usual).

Brawl at the Green Candle (Day 5)

If characters are not sufficiently cautious, both Karan and the Côr Aran, assisted by Gondorian troops from the garrison, will attempt to arrest them upon their arrival at The Green Candle. This may well precipitate a three-way melee and afford an opportunity for escape.

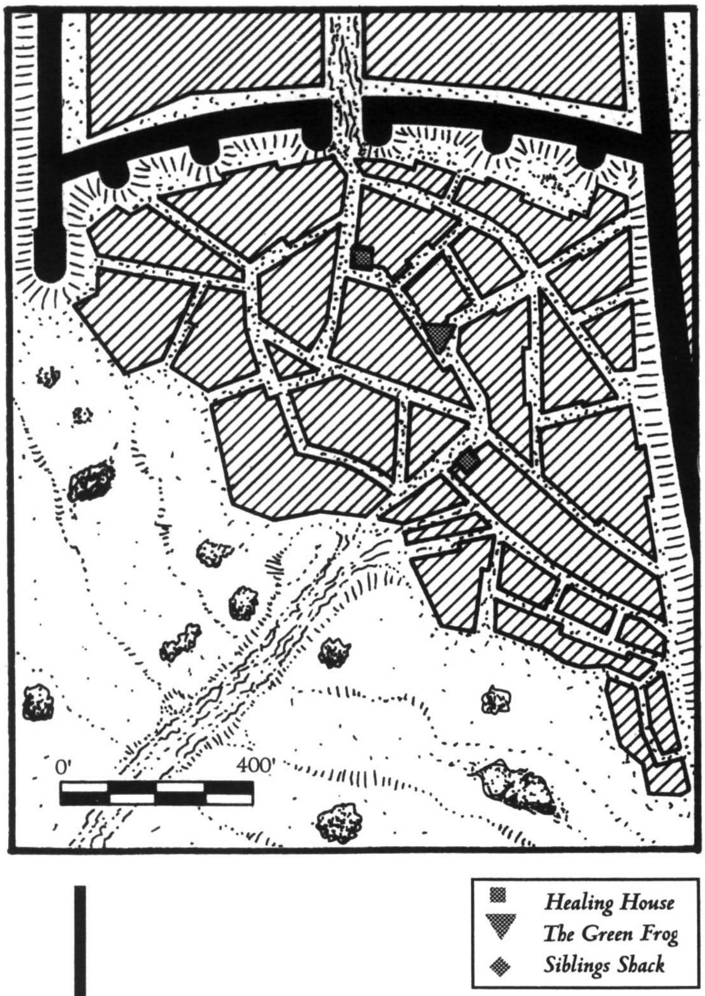
8.7 ADVENTURE: THE WOLF CUBS

Many who fled the sack of Osgiliath now live as refugees in the Shantytown outside the walls of Minas Ithil. Some of these have assumed other identities in order to evade the Crows sent to hunt them down. This is the tale of one such family. But even the simplest plan may go awry, especially when it encounters a small group of tough adventurers.

8.7.1 A TALE OF TEMPTING TREASURE

Malantur the Wolf belonged to the minor nobility of Ithilien and owned a villa in Osgiliath. The Nellas family had served as trusted advisers to the King for many generations and supported Eldacar as ardent loyalists during the civil war. Malantur was captured by Culcamalin's men during the siege (see Section 7.3.2) and brought before the rebel captains for judgment. He was executed for treason and, when Castamir was proclaimed King, the Nellas family lost its property to the Crown.

The Shantytown



Malantur's children escaped the plunder and burning of their home in 1437, and managed to take with them the family jewels. The Usurper had coveted this prize, which included some renowned and valuable treasures, but Gethron and Mallóriel successfully disguised themselves and evaded capture by mingling with those in exodus to Minas Ithil. And so they came to dwell in the growing refugee camp before the gates of the Tower of the Moon.

Gethron is now seventeen years old and Mallóriel twelve. During their four years in exile the siblings have learned many hard lessons of survival, becoming toughened and streetwise well beyond their years. They realize that they cannot fully trust anyone but themselves—many in the neighborhood who would gladly hand them over to the Crows in order to obtain the reward posted for their capture.

They have eluded detection thus far by posing as the orphans of an Osgiliath scribe and continue to live under the false names of Morwen and Beregar in the Shantytown, where they share a wooden shack to which they occasionally invite sojourning friends. In order to eat, they have been forced to convert a portion of their treasure into money with the help of an acquaintance. The rest of the jewels they have hidden in several well-concealed locations within a day's march of the city walls.

Youth matures swiftly under harsh conditions, and Gethron has been confronted with experiences that would daunt someone twice his age. He has killed before in self-defense and is ready to kill again should that prove necessary. The memory of his heritage leads Gethron to hope for Eldacar's return and the restoration of his family line. Gethron has assumed full responsibility for the survival of his sister and himself since their flight from Osgiliath. Apart from Mallóriel, he trusts only Aelindur and Rohtur, who have unselfishly assisted him in his need.

The Nellas siblings were eventually recognized by Hargon, who had worked as a scribe for Malantur and was therefore familiar with his children. Since that time, Hargon had joined the Côr Aran and was successful in demonstrating the necessary ruthlessness for accomplishing his assignments. In 1440, Caramir sent him to Minas Ithil for the more demanding task of collaborating with the Daen infantry and interrogating their prisoners. Hargon's orderly procedure in the execution of his duties has endeared him to his cell chief, and the Daen admire the thoroughness of his interrogation sessions (from which few subjects survive).

Hargon recognized Mallóriel while passing through the Twilight Gates with a group of Daen returning from assignment in North Ithilien; he kept this discovery to himself, remembering the bounty on their heads and the matter of the jewels, and wanting to walk away from the affair a wealthy man.

His plan is to first locate Gethron and Mallóriel's residence in Shantytown. He has promised his Daen comrades a fair share of the reward in exchange for their assistance, but has told them nothing of the jewels. He plans to set them to capture the Nellas siblings while he searches for the jewels in their home. If he finds that the children have hidden the treasure elsewhere, he will interrogate them privately until they reveal the location.

Hargon and his Daen accomplices approach the Nellas siblings' shack in an attempt at surprise, but are detected by Gethron and Mallóriel, who flee with soldiers in hot pursuit. The siblings become separated and their pursuers divide their ranks. Possessing an intimate knowledge of the ways of Shantytown, it does not take Beregar long to lose his nine Daen pursuers, who spend several hours attempting to recover his tracks while he surreptitiously assembles six of his comrades. He plans to wait until after dark to ambush Hargon's men one by one.

8.7.2 THE NPCS

HARGON (1402-1447†)

Hargon is an expert administrator and interrogator who is appreciated by his superiors for his unfailing ability to produce results; he is not a warrior, however, and does not want to risk his life while cooperating with the rowdy Daen, always ready to show their martial prowess. He remains in the background and will not stay in Shantytown after dark, fearing for his life.

Hargon is tall, dark-haired, and brown-eyed. He is capable of doing anything to achieve his goals without the slightest regard for the well-being of others. He conceals his unpleasant nature beneath a polished surface. He is dressed as a wealthy scholar, though preferring a simple attire of excellent cloth and cut, usually in black.

"BEREGAR" (1424-1483)

Gethron has assumed full responsibility for his and his sister's the survival since their flight from Osgiliath, and is known in Shantytown by the false name of "Beregar." Apart from Mallóriel, he trusts only Aelindur and Rohtur, who have selflessly assisted him in his need.

Gethron is a tall and lanky youth. He is dark-haired and brown-eyed, and wisps of beard have begun to appear on his cheeks. He dresses in an odd assortment of worn clothes, which conceal two daggers and a sling.

"MORWEN" (1429-1495)

Mallóriel goes by the name of "Morwen," and is as tough as any girl in Shantytown—she knows its ways intimately. Like her brother, she has also learned the use of a dagger and sling, which she will not hesitate to use if necessary.

Mallóriel looks like any Shantytown refugee—skinny, dirty, and wearing an odd mixture of worn clothes. She purposefully dresses in a boyish style, having learnt that being mistaken for a lad will spare her some harassment. Her unkempt hair is brown and her eyes green.

AELINDUR (1415-1521)

Aelindur is a Journeyman healer from Lossarnach who serves the people of Minas Ithil's Shantytown. She is strong-willed and strictly adheres to ideals of the Faithful. She despises the Usurper's oppressive regime and has joined Nimloth as a non-violent means of resistance (see Section 7.5.2).

The small house that the healers of Minas Anor have established in the Shantytown of Minas Ithil is overseen by Aelindur. There she and her husband provide basic medical assistance for the refugees, who are deeply indebted to them for their labors—many would defend them with their lives, and some actually have. (Aelindur was once harassed by Daen mercenaries near the Twilight Gate, and many Shantytowners quickly intervened to save her, resulting in fatalities on both sides.)

Aelindur is tall (5'10"), thin, frail-looking, and quiet. She has blonde hair of shoulder length, usually kept in a pony-tail while working. Her warm blue eyes are perceptive and she is able to assess a situation at a glance. She is generally discreetly dressed, preferring dresses in white or pale blue.

ROHTUR (1410-1546)

Rohtur is the herbmaster of the Shantytown Healers' Hall and husband to Aelindur. Born into a lineage of loremasters from Osgiliath, Rohtur's career was set for him at an early age. His father sent him to study under a renowned master of herb lore, whose discipline Rohtur learned with enthusiasm. Rohtur lost both family and home in the sack of Osgiliath, and escaped to Minas Ithil.

Once settled in the Shantytown, his expertise soon led to an acquaintance with Aelindur the healer, who often asked for his advice concerning herbal remedies. This relationship grew into love, and in 1439 Rohtur married Aelindur. Rohtur continues to assist his beloved wife in supplying her drugs and healing herbs, and often travels to distant vales in the Ered Lithui or to the forested outskirts of North Ithilien in search of rare plants. He is aware of Aelindur's involvement in Nimloth (see Section 7.5.2) and supports it, though Rohtur himself has not joined as he is not a healer.

Rohtur is a short, jovial fellow with blond hair and blue eyes. His hair is getting thin and will soon leave him partially bald. His mixed Dúnadan-Northman heritage reveals itself in his distinctively "northern" appearance.

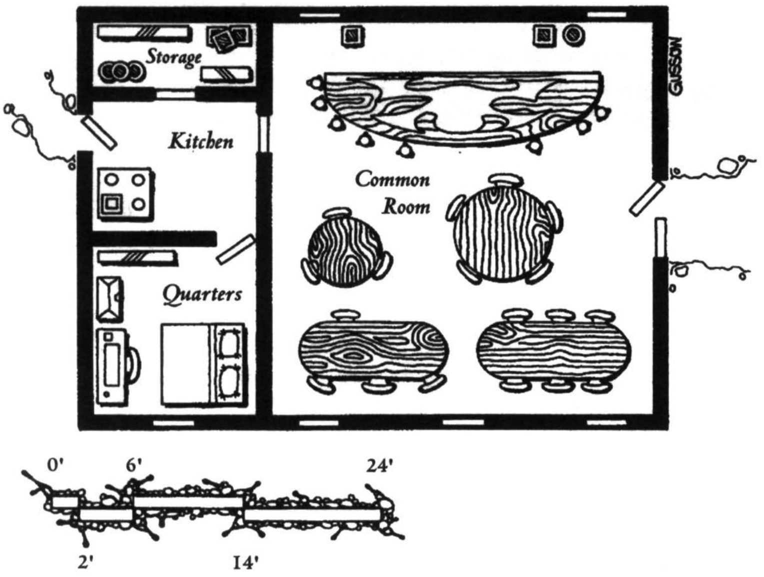
8.7.3 THE SETTINGS

The Siblings' Shack

Gethron and Mallóriel dwell in a small, rickety wooden building which was constructed by them in 1438 with the help of some friends. It consists of a single, nine-by-nine foot room, which has two cots and one low table. Food is cooked on a simple stove (which also provides warmth during cold spells) in one of the room's corners. A wooden box contains basic household utensils. While the building has been improved over the years, it remains a precarious residence.

The Green Frog

The Shantytown beerhouse is as poorly constructed as its surroundings, consisting of a single, large room with tables and stools, a small storage room, a kitchen, and a small room in which Gildor, the owner, lives with his wife (Bereth) and two boys. The Green Frog offers beer, sausages, dark bread, and other simple food, whose quality ranges from poor to mediocre (i.e., what the Shantytowners are able to afford).



The Green Frog

The Healing House

Probably the only well-constructed building in the Shantytown, it was built in 1439 by the healers of Minas Anor with the assistance of some generous citizens from Minas Ithil. The wooden house has two stories. A clinic occupies the bottom floor, while the top floor affords Rohtur and Aelindur a place to sleep.

1. Waiting Room. The main entry to the house is through the door to this room.

2. Treatment Room.

3. Storage Room. This room is usually locked. The walls have shelves with medical equipment, such as bandages, stretches, and crutches. A small locker contains healing drug and herbs of many kinds.

4. Corridor. The door to the outside is usually locked. It is the back entry to the house. The stairs lead up to Aelindur and Rohtur's bedroom.

5. Living Room. The table is surrounded by four chairs. There is a bookshelf at one wall, containing some tomes on herbs, drugs, and medicine.

6. Kitchen. The small kitchen has a stove and the usual kitchen utensils.

7. Bedroom. This room contains a wide bed and two chest with clothes and other personal belongings.

8. Storage Room. The room contains some unused furniture.

8.7.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to aid the Nellas siblings in their current plight. This will entail confronting Daen mercenaries from Minas Ithil's garrison, but success may depend more on the use of wits than on martial skill.

Starting the Characters

The adventure is designed for a group of two to four characters. Its location may easily be changed to the Minas Anor Shantytown, in which case the Daen mercenaries must be replaced with Southrons; though the healers house and its inhabitants require no alterations.

Player-characters are literally thrown into the sequence of events during a visit to Shantytown one afternoon. After finishing their business they stop at the Green Frog beerhouse to sit at table, when Morwen comes running through the door and throws herself into the arms of one of the characters. Characters once acquainted with the Nellas family in Osgiliath may recognize the girl as Mallóriel. She screams for help as an armed company of Daen soldiers enters the tavern. The characters must act swiftly.

Aids

Morwen can give them much useful advice, and neither Aelindur nor Rohtur will evict them from the healing house should they seek sanctuary there. Beregar and his friends may provide assistance after dusk. Shantytowners will not fight the soldiers, but neither will they aid the hated mercenaries. Daen who demand directions will receive incorrect or incomprehensible answers, and may well encounter strange accidents while pursuing their prey; but Shantytowners act with subtlety so as to avoid direct confrontation with Heruvorn's men.

Obstacles

Hargon's Daen accomplices are ordinary mercenaries from the city garrison. They are seasoned warriors who do not fear meddling interlopers but are wary about the Shantytowners, being well informed of the fate of their comrades who were caught molesting the healer, Aelindur (see below). Wanting to avoid a similar confrontation, the Daen will abstain from attacking either the healers' house or its residents. The mercenaries' speech is heavily accented, and their knowledge of Westron is quite limited.

OUTCOMES

Assuming that they are not forced to leave the environs of Minas Ithil, characters who have saved the life of either Beregar or Morwen, or who have participated in preventing their capture by Hargon's accomplices, will be promised a reward. The Nellas siblings will direct them to the residence of Aelindur and Rohtur, who will have "something" for them. Characters who take them up on this promise will be given a beautiful, gold necklace decorated with pearls (worth perhaps five hundred gold pieces).

If none of the Daen survive the night, the lack of witnesses will leave the authorities with little to go on, thus neutralizing the present danger to both the characters and the siblings, but if Hargon survives, he remains a threat to Gethron and Mallóriel. While the siblings are able to recognize Hargon on sight, they do not know that he is with the Côr Aran.

Any Daen escaping Shantytown alive returns to the city barracks in order to plot his revenge on the siblings and annoying interlopers who frustrated his success. Should characters meet any of these Daen again, they will hardly bother to take prisoners.

If the siblings are captured but not tortured to death by Hargon, they will be handed over to the Côr Aran and face a journey to the Nest in Pelargir. Under these circumstances, there may be little that characters can hope to do about it, unless they try to liberate the siblings when they are transported out of Minas Ithil.

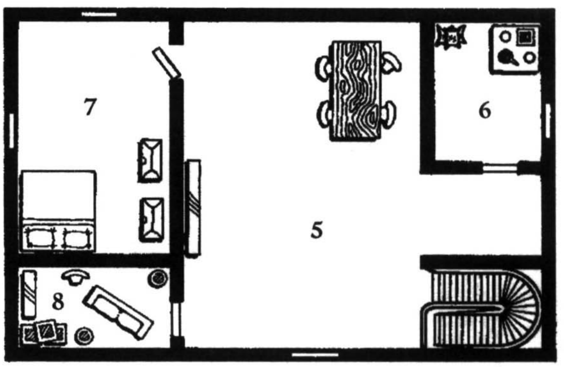
If uncaptured, Gethron will resolve to flee Shantytown and seek refuge elsewhere, far from Minas Ithil—this may become the pretext for another adventure, if characters help to escort the siblings to some safer location. If Hargon survives, characters might encounter him elsewhere in Gondor on a later occasion.

8.7.5 ENCOUNTERS

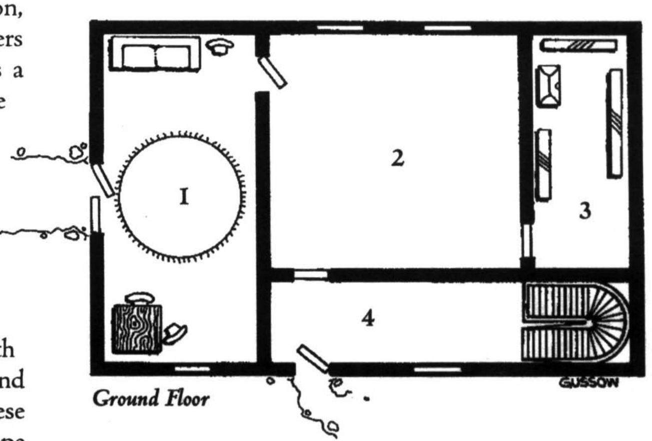
The hectic pace of the events of this adventure span a period of less than twenty-four hours, and the encounters listed below occur more or less sequentially (though the individual length of each may be influenced by character actions). A gamemaster may be forced to improvise should characters choose an unexpected course of action.

A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS AND THE JACKAL'S DEMAND

Morwen enters the Green Frog and begs the characters for help, claiming that her pursuers will rape her. She knows that Hargon is looking for her and her brother (having seen him approaching the shack with the Daen), but does not realize that their treasure is the motive driving the former scribe's actions. Hence, she will not mention the treasure—and would be unlikely to do so anyway, unless assured that her would-be saviors could be absolutely trusted. The six Daen (another three wait outside) demand that the girl be handed over to them. The other beerhouse guests withdraw in order to avoid getting involved in the brawl.



Second Floor



Ground Floor

The Healing House

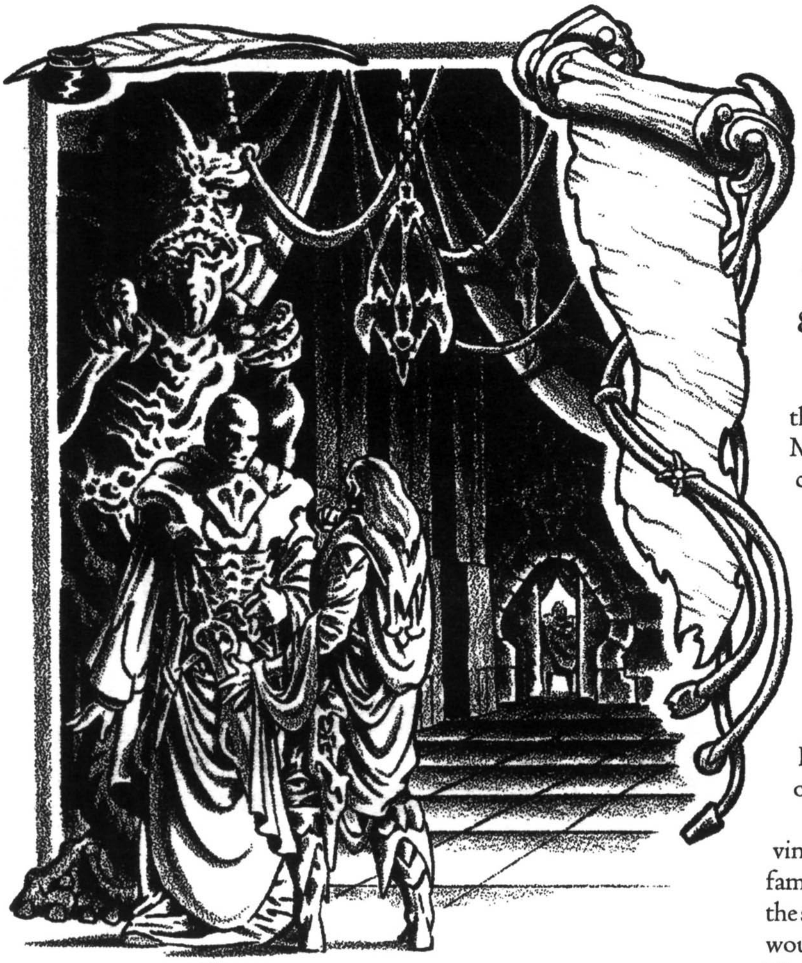
ANOTHER FLIGHT

Characters will most likely be outnumbered by the well-armed soldiers, so that a melee would likely result in heavy losses, and those unwilling to comply with the demand must flee from the mercenaries. Any attempt to reach the safety of the city walls while being openly pursued may lead to arrest by the gate guards on the pretense of "fleeing from the force of law and order."

If given an opportunity, Morwen will inform her rescuers that the healers' house is the only place in the Shantytown that the Daen will not forcibly enter; she can easily provide a safe route for reaching it. Should fleeing characters opt for another course of action, they will be pursued relentlessly by nine rebel hunters highly skilled in catching evasive types.

BESIEGED IN THE HEALING HOUSE

Fleeing characters who reach the sanctuary of Aelindur and Rohtur's residence will soon find themselves surrounded by Hargon's men, who will thwart any attempts at escape. But their presence cannot be hidden, and a crowd casting wary eyes on the Daen mercenaries will encircle the house. They are uncertain of what to do and reluctant to confront Heruvorn's soldiers unless they should violate the premises. The Daen are aware of their peril and will restrain themselves accordingly. Hargon will watch from a distance, not wishing to reveal his presence.



Celebrindor blackmails Barahir Aludor

Ending the Siege

There is no street lighting in the Shantytown, making it pitch black save for the light of the moon. Characters still in the healing house after sunset might attempt to sneak away at this time, since their adversaries are equally hampered by the darkness. Characters may also receive some unexpected help from Beregar and his buddies who are out hunting Daen. The mercenaries may face unexpected accidents in the darkness as angry Shantytowners take their revenge on the hated soldiers. The gamemaster should strive to create an atmosphere of suspension and fear, interrupted by sudden violent melees.

Interrogating Enemies

The mercenaries are tough soldiers and unlikely to talk, but should characters succeed in capturing and interrogating one of these, they may learn that Gethron and Mallóriel are wanted by the Crows and that there is a good reward for turning them in. They know nothing, of course, about the jewels.

In the unlikely event that Hargon is himself captured, characters will be faced with an unscrupulous man. He is prepared to talk if threatened with torture, but will attempt to deflect any blame upon his Daen accomplices. He will not in any way imply that he knows about the Nellas family treasure.

8.8 ADVENTURE: THE DISTRESSED HUSBAND

During Castamir's reign, it is of paramount importance for the traditionalist nobility to be of pure Dúnadan ancestry. The merest fleck of lesser blood in one's family tree could result in immediate loss of status and position. After all, that was the cause for the rebellion against Eldacar.

8.8.1 A TALE OF ANXIETY AND ANCESTRY

Celebrindor, an emissary of Lugarlûr, has been given the task of mapping out the clandestine spy networks in Minas Ithil. To accomplish this, he has obtained compromising genealogical records pertaining to the family of Barahir Aludor, a treasury officer in the service of Heruvorn, and intends to use them to blackmail Barahir into disclosing information to him about the Steward's spies.

Barahir Aludor is a frightened man. Two days ago, Celebrindor approached him while he was walking home from his job at the Steward's treasury. The stranger spoke in a subdued voice with a Harithilien dialect, claiming that he possessed the original Aludor family records from Osgiliath.

As the head of the family, Barahir had been convinced that the documents had been destroyed when the family's house there was gutted by fire in the sack. "Now," the stranger said, "it would be most unfortunate if Heruvorn would discover that one of Barahir's ancestors had been of Northron blood." Barahir quietly concurred.

The stranger wanted certain facts on how the Steward paid his covert agents and indicated that he knew that Barahir could obtain these facts. The stranger would return in about a week's time to collect the information, but declined to give any specifics on when and where he would appear; then he walked away while Barahir stood silent and shivering—perhaps from the chill of the impending night, or perhaps from fear.

A frightened person does not always act rationally. Knowing what disaster a revelation would bring upon him and his family, Barahir has lost his wits. Since the encounter, he has behaved erratically and suspiciously (despite believing that he has kept his distress hidden), attracting the attention of his superior, Faramir. His wife Ariel has also noticed that something is wrong, in spite of Barahir's repeated denials.

The frightened Barahir will obtain the requested information and pass it on to the quiet stranger. However, he is under surveillance of one small team of agents, despatched by Faramir, and the player group, hired by Ariel. Both these groups are charged with finding out what Barahir is up to. They are bound to run into each other during the days before the quiet man's return.

8.8.2 THE NPCS

Celebrindor (1401-1623)

Celebrindor is a Dúnadan nobleman from Harithilien. Being a younger son in the family, he left home in the 1420's to seek his fortune. He became ensnared by Adûnaphel in 1431 and is now a loyal servant of Lugarlûr. He is a competent and ruthless agent, preferring to work as a lone wolf. His mistress has given him a long dagger of exquisite quality (+20) and a long black cloak (+50 on all stalk/hide maneuvers in darkness).

Currently, Celebrindor rents a room by Artamir, a silversmith in the Quarter of Wells. The artisan believes that he works for the (fake) Forgil loyalist organization and he has been told that Celebrindor does so, too. Hence Celebrindor can come and go as he pleases, no questions asked—nor will Artamir discuss his tenant's doings with strangers.

Celebrindor purchased the Aludor family documents from a traveling merchant named Saeros (see Section 6.6.1), while the latter was visiting Minas Ithil. The merchant refused to disclose how the genealogy had come into his possession, merely claiming that it was an interesting set of parchments from Osgiliath. The price was reasonable, and Celebrindor was much pleased when he saw the content—an excellent blackmail tool.

Celebrindor is tall (6'10"), and his dark good looks reveal his full-blooded Dúnadan ancestry. His face is cold, and his eyes lack mirth. He prefers to dress austerely in black and grey.

Barahir (1371-1495)

Barahir Aludor is a nobleman who has lived in Minas Ithil his whole life. He has made a career in the city administration and has acquired a reputation for conscientious and competent handling of complex matters. However, he has carefully stayed out of politics, though he has vague, but unstated, loyalist sympathies in his heart, of which not even Ariel is aware. Barahir and his family live in a stately house with many servants in the Queen's Quarter. His only child, Beleg, is an officer of Castamir's army and is stationed at Morannon.

Barahir is tall with a stately poise. His sparse hair is grey with a large bald spot. His grey eyes dart nervously.

Ariel (1378-1498)

Ariel is a noblewoman from Minas Anor. She has taken upon her shoulders the administration of the Aludor household and widespread properties, doing so very well. Due to a riding accident several years ago, her right leg is in bad condition and she walks poorly, preferring to stay indoors or traveling by palanquin. She loves her husband and he returns the feelings.

Ariel is of medium height, with long brown hair that is kept in a single braid; she usually dresses in a simple yet attractive style. She speaks with a distinctive Minas Anor dialect.

Faramir (1367-1447†)

Faramir the Comptroller has a key position in Minas Ithil's administration, being in charge of the city treasury. He acts as the boss for Ulrad and Fíriel. Faramir is a Dúnadan nobleman from Pelargir with strong outward devotion to the traditionalist cause; in fact, he is mostly out to enrich himself.

Faramir's appearance matches his high station. His hair has whitened with age, though it still is thick and flowing.

Ulrad and Fíriel (1410-1447†)

Ulrad and Fíriel are Faramir's henchmen. They are a married couple originating from the poor section of Minas Ithil. They have a criminal background, specializing in thefts and scams. When Faramir had established a position of influence in the city administration, the couple got a straightforward proposal: work for him or suffer badly for the crimes of the past. They made the easy choice.

Over the last few years, they have worked as specialists in shadowing and burglary. Their boss is satisfied with their performance, and there have been ample opportunities for personal enrichment. They feel no loyalty to Castamir nor to Eldacar, their main goal being surviving long enough to sneak away and enjoy a better life elsewhere in Gondor. Currently, they rent a two-room set in a house in the Quarter of Shadow.

Ulrad and Fíriel purposefully cultivate nondescript looks. They dress like the commoners of the city and have average looks: medium height, brown hair, and brown eyes.

8.8.3 THE SETTING

The adventure is set in the streets of Minas Ithil. No major events will occur at Barahir's office or home, unless the players chose to confront him there for questioning.

8.8.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to determine what Barahir is doing and report to his wife.

Starting the Characters

The plot of this adventure presupposes that the player-characters have acquired a reputation for discretion and trustworthiness. When Ariel decides that she needs to investigate her husband's activities, she asks some of her friends among the nobility for information on suitable freelancers, and the characters are recommended. They are summoned to a neutral meeting spot, Ariel arriving in a palanquin.

Ariel wants to know what troubles her husband. She offers each adventurer a basic pay of one silver piece per day, plus a bonus of ten additional silvers each, if they manage to save Barahir completely from whatever problems he faces. She also, regardless how successful the characters are, requests a complete report of what they have done during their mission.

Aids

Ariel is willing to answer the characters' questions (within reasonable limits, of course). However, she is not aware of the fleck on her husband's ancestry. She knows that her husband is terribly worried about something, but she believes that it has to do with some other woman.

Obstacles

Celebrindor and Faramir's two henchmen must be overcome or avoided.

Outcomes

If the characters, bring the matter successfully to an end, they will get the agreed sums of money and they will also have acquired the Aludors as contacts in the Minas Ithil nobility; Barahir and Ariel will be very grateful. If the players cause serious trouble for Faramir and are identified by him, they will have a hard time afterwards, since he is a dangerous and resourceful adversary. Celebrindor may take the opportunity to frame the characters for whatever misdeeds he has committed, especially if he has murdered Faramir's two henchmen.

Madman attacking a wagon

8.8.5 ENCOUNTERS

Stalking Faramir's Henchmen

Faramir has given Ulrad and Fíriel the task of finding out what Barahir is up to, preferably producing evidence of such quality that it can be used in court if necessary. The couple go about their business in a very competent way, efficiently tailing Barahir (who however is so preoccupied with his worries that he hardly would notice if he was shadowed by Heruvorn himself).

Ulrad and Fíriel are not particularly ruthless (neither has ever murdered) and they do their best to stay out of a fight. If cornered, they are ready to negotiate, gladly naming their employer to instill some respect in their adversary. That fact would, however, hardly impress Celebrindor, who quickly would murder them instead. It is possible for the players to negotiate a non-aggression deal with Ulrad and Fíriel, provided that they convince the couple that they only are pursuing the matter of a wife's suspicion of infidelity.

Stalking Celebrindor

Celebrindor's intention is simple: to inconspicuously approach Barahir again eight days after the first meeting, acquire the desired information, and disappear into the shadows. Of course, he will carefully scout the area before making his move. He has no intention of disposing of the man, since he still possesses the vital documents and may use blackmail again.

It is very difficult to shadow Celebrindor, since he is perceptive and capable of losing pursuers. If he discovers that he is under scrutiny, he will not only evade it very quickly, but also make a serious attempt to find out why. If cornered, he will use whatever lies, deceptions, and violent means that are necessary to enable a successful escape; he is a man utterly without scruples.

Talking to Barahir

During the five days between Ariel's employment of the characters and Celebrindor's reappearance, Barahir will unsuccessfully pretend that nothing particular is afoot, leaving for his office in the morning and returning home at night. He is too worried to enjoy such matters as the company of friends or entertainment. If the characters confront Barahir with questions, he will initially claim complete ignorance but, if pressured, will break and spill his story. If the characters offer to help him out of his predicament, he will be visibly relieved and ready to lend them whatever assistance he is capable of.

9.0 FURTHER ADVENTURES

This section presents supplementary adventure material for a campaign placed outside of (or between) Gondor's six major urban centers. The first adventure, "Bergil's Odyssey" (Section 9.1), provides the gamemaster with a convenient plot device for motivating player characters to travel from one city to another. The second adventure, "Ratcatcher" (Section 9.2), details a large-scale military campaign set in Dunfearan, which follows from the events of "The Council of Gondor" adventure (see Section 7.7). The third adventure, "The Pale Riders" (Section 9.3), is set in Rhovanion for characters seeking out the exiled Eldacar. Section 9.4 is a collection of previously published materials on Calenardhon during the Kin-strife, which appeared in the now out-of-print MERP supplement *Isengard and Northern Gondor.*

9.1 ADVENTURE: BERGIL'S ODYSSEY

Family heirlooms are vulnerable to confiscation during the Usurper's reign, especially if the inheritance comes from one suspected of loyalist activity. Sometimes, an heir is not even given the benefit of a public claim through legal process, since the Côr Aran tend to take action without formal authorization. By then, of course, it's too late.

9.1.1 THE TALE OF AN OLD ADVENTURER AND HIS UNUSUAL TREASURE

Bergil's story begins with the tale of Zorakathôr. A scion of House Calenel (an ancient Roquen family of Anórien), Zorakathôr was a famous warrior with a glorious career in Gondor's army. After retiring in 1391, he sought adventure in the lands south of Gondor. Zorakathôr was well suited to the adventurer's life: the courage, leadership, intelligence, and military competence that had brought him to fame in the armies of Gondor continued to serve him well.

In 1402, however, Zorakathôr led an ill-fated expedition to Harad, from which he never returned. The only survivor was Bergil, who informed Zorakathôr's relatives of the disaster. The story never became common knowledge, and many believed that the expedition had perished without a trace.

THE VOYAGE OF THE RISING SUN

Zorakathôr had heard of a evil Apysaic nobleman, Sharg, also called the Lord of the Towers, who was said to be very wealthy. Tales of the cruelties he visited upon his slaves and serfs combined with an eye for gold led Zorakathôr to organize an expedition to free the slaves and plunder the Towers. The company left Osgiliath with one ship, the *Rising Sun,* and sailed down the coast beyond Umbar into Far Harad. The Towers were located near the coast, so the adventurers anchored their ship at a fishing village and made a daring raid on Sharg's fortified home. The attack was successful; the adventurers slew Sharg, liberated his slaves, and plundered his estate.

When Zorakathôr's expedition headed homewards, the ship was heavily laden. Nothing had been overlooked, including Sharg's not inconsiderable library. The books and tomes were stored in several wooden crates on the deck, and there they obstructed the handling of the ship.

On the way back the ship passed the port city of Barádaphel, where Zorakathôr's half-brother, Adrahil, lived. Zorakathôr decided to ask Adrahil to store the book crates in his cellar, until such time as Zorakathôr could find a customer for them and return to retrieve them. Adrahil acquiesced, and the crates were placed in a locked room in the basement of his house.

Some nights later, a fire raged through Barádaphel. Many buildings along the Street of Smiths were destroyed, Adrahil's house among them. Adrahil and his family perished in the flames, and the house collapsed in ruins.

When the ground was cleared afterwards, the staircase down to the cellar was filled with rubble and ash. The lot remained vacant for over a year, and dirt and weather erased any sign of the cellar below. However, the locked store-room was not damaged by the fire. It was so sturdily built that it survived the collapse of the house. The ground was cleared, and a new building, called the Red House (due to the color of its bricks), was constructed on top of the foundations of the old one.

The *Rising Sun,* meanwhile, continuing her voyage homewards, was caught by a sudden thunderstorm from the Western Ocean. She sunk and all aboard her perished, except Bergil, who managed to cling to the wreckage long enough to reach shore. Eventually, he made his way home with his share of the plunder: a pouch of precious jewels, amazingly intact upon his belt.

BERGIL'S ODYSSEY

Bergil did not often speak of his adventure. As he grew older, he told his lover, Morwen, parts of the tale, and eventually wrote a epic poem recounting the voyage of the Rising Sun and the fate of her crew. It was never published, however, and most of the manuscript was destroyed by a fire.

Although Bergil imparted no importance to the book crates, and never knew their fate or disposition, he wrote of them in his poem, detailing the visit to Barádaphel and the hiding of the crates.

Until his death, Bergil lived in Alphaelin, spending his time with friends and books. When the Kin-strife began, Bergil considered "that Castamir" to be an uncouth and unreliable fellow, and started to work against the usurper King with a group of like-minded friends. Their circle tried to monitor the political and military developments in and around their city, passing their findings on to a trader who occasionally ventured north, and who in turn passed on their missives to the true King in exile. In time, Bergil's activities attracted the attention of the Crows, and the monitoring of his household began. This vigilance was not to slacken even with the old adventurer's death in 1441.

9.1.2 THE NPCS

Lothárion (1384-1461)

Lothárion is Bergil's lawyer and the executor of his will. Lothárion is native to Alphaelin and specializes in civil matters, such as deeds, wills, and business contracts. Bergil made his will and deposited it in Lothárion's office many years ago. Because Bergil had no close relatives in the city, Lothárion was compelled to ask Bergil's brother, living in another city, to notify the heir of the old man's death.

Lothárion is short, with gray-black hair, and gray squinting eyes (due to being near-sighted). He is dressed like a well-to-do city dweller, always wearing attire suitable for the occasion. He talks far too much for most people's taste, though not, of course, about his job; he is very careful with his professional reputation. But he fills the air with chat about the latest dinner, the current theater plays in the city, the sauciest gossip, and so on.

Morwen the Red (1384-1466)

Morwen runs a tailor shop that supplies the ladies of Alphaelin with fashionable dresses at affordable prices. She was Bergil's lover; their affair lasted some ten years. Morwen adored Bergil, but understood that their lifestyles were too disparate to live for long under the same roof.

Morwen is short and wiry. Her gray eyes are sharp, and she possesses a quick wit. The flaming red hair of her youth (which won Morwen her nickname) has become gray with age. Upon acqwuaintance with Morwen, one realizes why Bergil fell in love with her: she has charm, intelligence, and femininity. Morwen does not care much for politics, but she strongly disapproves of Castamir's "senseless" rule.

Meneldor (1411-1506)

Meneldor is a construction engineer whose house stands over the hidden cellar where Zorakathôr stowed the *Rising Sun*'s treasure. Meneldor purchased the Red House following the birth of his son in 1438. Meneldor currently earns his living designing large buildings, bridges, aqueducts, sewer systems and the like. He is a free-lance and generally works for city authorities or various architects.

Meneldor has hazel hair, a receding hairline, penetrating eyes, and a mouth that stretches into an extraordinary large grin. He is a nice fellow with a strong sense of humor and an incorrigible punster. Meneldor shares most of his wife's negative opinions about Castamir, but he has been more careful in expressing his thoughts. When at home, he usually dressed comfortably, on the verge of being sloppy, but he adopts proper attire when dealing with his business clients. He takes a pragmatic approach to most problems.

Túriel (1416-1523)

Túriel is a skilled warrior. She married Meneldor four years ago and has continued to keep her weapon skills honed, training with her sword and bow for an hour every morning. In tandem with her active pursuit of martial excellence, Túriel adheres strictly to the classical ideals of the Dúnedain.

These strong traditional moral convictions have led her to view Castamir's armed rebellion against Eldacar as illegitimate, since Eldacar was not an unjust monarch. The local Crows are well aware of her opinion, since she has expressed it to others at several occasions over the years. Since Túriel has not yet been involved in any anti-Castamir activities, however, they have left her alone, deeming there to be more important dissidents to watch.

She dresses in men's clothing, finding it more suited to her martial activities. She would not be mistaken for a man, however, with her woman's hairstyle and powerful feminine presence. Many people find her manner odd, but neither she nor her husband cares what others think and say in the matter. Her long dark brown hair is often braided; in tough situations, she ties the braids behind her head to keep them in place. Túriel is tall and beautiful in an athletic way.

9.1.3 THE SETTINGS

Alphaelin and Barádaphel may become any two cities in Gondor, though the latter must have a port. The Towers of Sharg may be relocated to the coast of Minhiriath or Enedwaith or Forochel. It does not affect the plot or the poetry fragments, but other geographic information in the adventure must be altered. Such a relocation is probably required, if Barádaphel is to be Lond Ernil.

Bergil's House

Bergil lived alone in a small house in Alphaelin. The dwelling has a bedroom, living room, kitchen, library, and an attic. Bergil lived there for some years, since his previous home was destroyed by fire. The house is well kept and, according to Bergil's will, will be sold, with its profits being divided among certain relatives. His library is small, but of impressive quality.

The Red House

The Red House on Zîrphel's Street of Smiths is a three-story building. The bottom floor contains a kitchen, a living room and a guest room (originally intended as a maid's room). The second floor has three bedrooms. One of these is currently converted into Meneldor's working-room. The top floor is the attic, which is only used for storage purposes. The house got its name from its red bricks, a rare construction material in this section of Barádaphel.

9.1.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to recover the lost treasure spoken of in Bergil's epic narrative, and to keep the Côr Aran from confiscating it. This will involve finding "The Lord of the Towers" at Bergil's house in Alphaelin, in the course of one of the player characters claiming their inheritance, followed by a journey to the city of Barádaphel in search of Adrahil's cellar. Deciphering the poem's fragments and locating the treasure's resting place will both involve investigation and cooperation with the residents of both cities.

This adventure is a useful tool for teaching the players how to operate in the Usurper's oppressive society. They will suffer a lot of unwanted attention from the Côr Aran, and they must realize that violence is a bad method of dealing with Crows. The Côr Aran will always retaliate with more violence than the characters can dish out, and in the long run, they cannot be defeated with swords and spells. Instead, the players must learn to avoid or deceive the watchers to escape their vigilance.

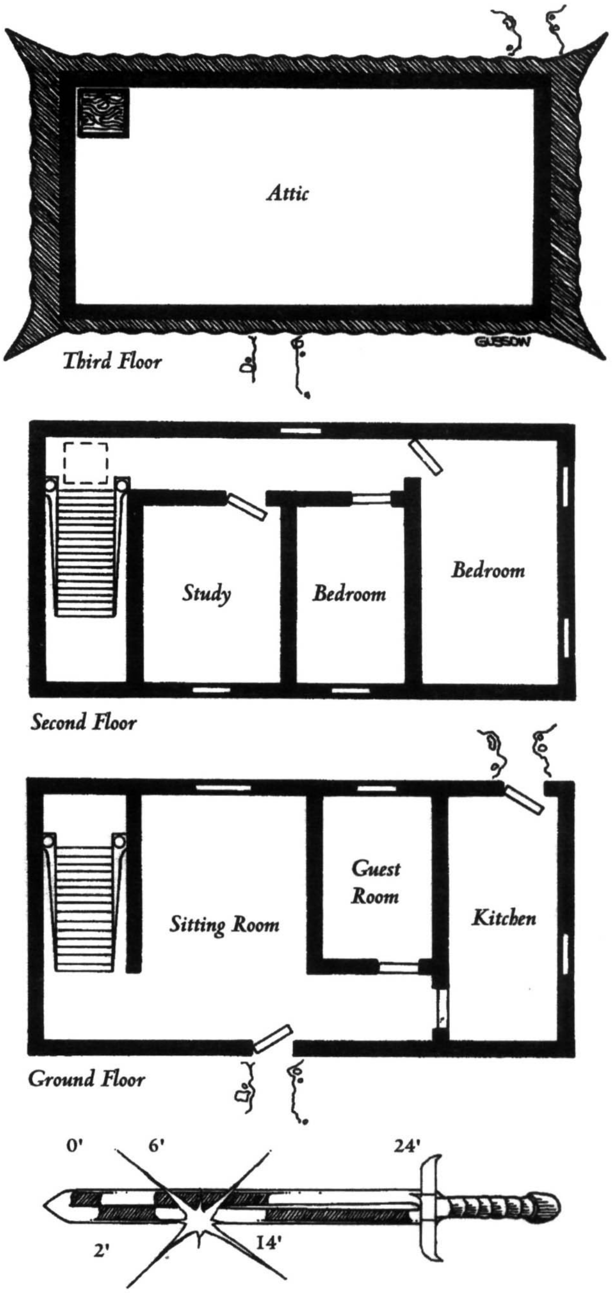
Starting the Characters

One of the characters receives a letter from his or her father, announcing the (natural) death of an uncle Bergil. The character travels to Bergil's house in the city of Alphaelin to take care of the legal aspects of the inheritance. There, she or he reads Bergil's will and take custody of the estate.

My dear child,

I have received a letter informing me of my brother Bergil's death. He passed away peacefully a few weeks ago and has already been buried. The letter was written by his lawyer, Lothárion, who requested the presence of a representative of the family to take responsibility for the estate. I have talked with our relatives and we came to the conclusion that you, being an experienced traveler, should be our representative. After all, it is a long journey from our city to Bergil's home. Please, my child, go to this Lothárion and take care of all matters necessary.

With love,
Father



The Red House

The character related to Bergil is not that familiar with his/her uncle, but knows that Bergil was a traveled man, even though he had stopped journeying many years ago. The character may have met Bergil many years ago, but the memory of the uncle is vague. A man with a reputation for odd behavior, Bergil never had a proper profession, but possessed some wealth of uncertain origins. He did not consort much with his relatives, but preferred to live a simple life with his friends.

Aids

The gamemaster must decide if Morwen knows the true location of Barádaphel. The name has been changed since the time of the expedition, and it is not common knowledge. If the characters are stuck in their investigations, she could give them that essential piece of information to encourage them to move on to the next phase of the adventure. On the other hand, a revelation from her could make things too easy for the characters, and, if so, she should not know the identity of the city. If necessary, she can later discover something at her home (e.g., an old letter, map, etc.) to help her realize which city it is.

There are a few scholars of literature in Gondor, most likely living in Minas Anor and Minas Ithil. While such a scholar may not know the location of Barádaphel immediately, he can easily get the information through some research. If the Crows know which scholar the characters consulted, they will persuade or coerce him to reveal what the characters wanted to know and what he told them. Hence, they will have a idea where the characters are heading, even though they perhaps do not yet know what the characters are looking for.

It is better to consult an archive than to ask a scholar, since in an library one can easily hide what one is looking for, provided that the characters think of such precautions. If they do not, the Crows may well force that information out of a librarian, too.

It should be possible to discover Zîrphel's true identity in the remnants of the national archives from Osgiliath. However, these are in a confused state since the sack in 1437, so it is a tough task (see Section 3.7). The gamemaster may introduce other archives and libraries in some major city, if that is a good way of letting characters make the necessary discovery.

If the players are experiencing undue difficulty discovering the location of Barádaphel, the GM may have to intercede on their behalf. Fortunately, Curunír often passes through Gondor on his continuing search for knowledge and lost lore. He is well-informed of the history of Men, and would certainly possess the information they seek. If the characters meet the Wizard and ask, they may well get the correct answer, perhaps with a return question on why they want to learn such an obscure fact. (And don't lie to a Wizard, he easily sees through deceptions!) On the other hand, a Wizard will not be harassed by the Crows. . .

Barádaphel is a well-run city with a good property archive, holding legal documents on ownership and construction of buildings in the city almost from the beginning of the Third Age. A character who spends some time there, looking through the material concerning the Street of Smiths, will discover Adrahil Calenel's deeds. This requires, of course, the knowledge that Zorakathôr was of the Calenel family. The archive contains documents revealing the destruction of Adrahil's house, the construction of a new one on the same site, and all the owners of that building. The current owner is listed as Meneldor the Engineer.

Another way of finding the house is to talk to old and knowledgeable Zîrphelian residents. The destruction of Adrahil's house took place in 1402, so there are still a few left who remember him, if he is properly identified, and who can tell where he once lived and what grievous fate he and his family suffered.

Obstacles

The characters face two obstacles: their ignorance about the events described in the poem, and potential interference from the Côr Aran. The latter is the more troublesome one, especially since it is hard to do anything about Crows without attracting even more suspicion.

The local Crows have been interested in Bergil for some time. Since the characters clearly have some connection to him, the Crows will begin to monitor them as well. They will pester the characters during the rest of the adventure (or longer!). The Côr Aran leader in Alphaelin strongly suspected Bergil to be involved in at least one loyalist group in the city. For that reason, he assigned one team to monitor the activities around Bergil's house. Its members will easily spot the arrival of the player characters.

Outcomes

The most expeditious way for the adventure to end would be to peacefully allow the Crows to inspect the crates. The Côr Aran officers will simply laugh at what they see: what appears to be a hidden library of academic books. They will think that the characters have spent an unreasonable amount of energy and time tracking down something of little apparent worth. The Crows will depart, bringing with them anyone who has been caught with an obvious crime. However, they may well continue to watch the characters if they are suspected of anti-Castamir activities.

Meneldor, having a sense for the ironic, will also be amused by the sheer absurdity of the situation. However, being a man of learning, he realizes that the books may well be worth selling. He will discuss that matter with the characters to find a mutually agreeable solution.

The adventure might also have a violent ending. The Crows will not be satisfied until they have ascertained the nature of the "treasure" the players have been seeking. If there is a battle in the Red House, it can only have disastrous consequences for the characters. Even if they kill or incapacitate all of the raiding Crows, they cannot get away with the treasure, as its bulk will slow them down. Instead, they must flee immediately, before more Crows appear and see the carnage. Following such a deed, the Côr Aran will spend a lot of effort chasing down the characters to have them killed or sentenced to death in a court. The characters must most likely leave Gondor and spend the rest of the Usurper's reign in exile.

9.1.5 ENCOUNTERS

MEETING LOTHÁRION

When the characters arrive at Alphaelin, they must locate the lawyer mentioned in the father's letter. A few simple questions will divulge his place of business; his office is easy to find. Lothárion gives the related character Bergil's will and shows him or her the estate. Lothárion has all keys to the house, which the character will receive after the legal paperwork is completed. Among the belongings they find a locked oak chest containing some pieces of parchment, giving obscure clues to a treasure, buried in some other city.

If the characters venture into the small attic, they will discover a stout old oak chest, battered from Bergil's journeys and locked with a high quality padlock. It is the only thing that Bergil has willed to his (player character) nephew/niece. Inside the chest is some of Bergil's equipment: a suit of high-quality chainmail (+5), a broadsword, a dagger with a jeweled hilt, and a worn backpack. The chest also holds a thin package, wrapped in waterproof cloth, which contains some fire-damaged parchments: the fragments of "The Lord of the Towers."

READING BERGIL'S ODYSSEY

"The Lord of the Towers" is an epic poem, written in the 1420's by Bergil in his characteristic longhand, using old-fashioned Adûnaic and an ancient and rarely used rhythmic stanza without rhymes. It describes Zorakathôr's expedition and its eventual destruction. However, Bergil's poetic prowess was unimpressive. He mastered neither the language nor the stanza properly, and the text hence contains many technical errors and a good deal of simply bad verse.

A person with knowledge of Adûnaic to level 4 or 5 can read the text. Successful comprehension of the text does not guarantee a correct interpretation, however. There are only seven pages or fragments of same in the package, all scorched by fire to some degree. They are numbered, but not consecutively, since they are the remnants of Bergil's book. The other pages were destroyed when Bergil's previous lodging was ruined by fire. He never had the opportunity to reconstruct the complete text.

Page 1

Tell us, my harp, of my life's one daring journey,
which wandered full many ways after we had sacked
the mighty citadel of Sharg.
Many were the men whose dying I saw and whose pains I learned,
aye, and many the woes I suffered in my heart upon the sea,
seeking to save my own life and return to my city.

Page 5

So spoke Zorakathôr, and in answer Manwë, whose eyes see afar,
sent forth two eagles, flying on high, from a mountain peak.
For a time they flew swift as the blasts of the wind
side by side with their wings outspread;
but when they reached the middle of the many-voiced assembly,
they wheeled about, flapping their wings rapidly,
and darted away to the west over the houses and cities of men.
And we were seized with wonder at the birds when our eyes beheld them,
and pondered in our hearts on what was to come to pass.

Page 23

Then again the fighters hurled their sharp spears eagerly.
But the Shargish lord smote Zorakathôr on the hand by the wrist,
and the steel tore the surface of the skin. And a black man
with his long spear grazed the shoulder of Seregon above
his shield, but the spear flew over and fell upon the ground.

Page 27

So saying, sharp-eyed Elrandir led the way quickly,
and I followed in the footsteps of the Elf-lord.
Now when we had come down to the ships and to the sea,
we found on the shore our strong-armed comrades,
and the strong and mighty Zorakathôr spoke among us:
"Come friends, let us fetch the loot, for all is now gathered
together on the quay. Our foeman knows naught thereof,
nor his soldiers either: all of them met our swords."
Thus saying, he led the way, and we went along with him.
So we brought and stowed everything in the well-benched ship,
as the proud son of Elenna bade. Then on board the ship
stepped Zorakathôr, and Elrandir went before him
and sat down in the stern of the ship, and near him Zorakathôr,
while we men loosed the stern cables and ourselves
stepped aboard and sat down upon the benches.
And eagle-lord Manwë sent us a favourable wind,
a strong-blowing westwind, that sang over the wine-dark sea.
And Zorakathôr called to his men, and bade us
lay hold of the tackling, and we hearkened to his call.
The mast of fir we raised and set in the hollow socket,
and made it fast with fore-stays, and hauled up
the white sail with twisted thongs of ox-hide.
So the wind filled the belly of the sail, and the dark wave
sang loudly about the stem of the ship as she went,
and she sped over the wave accomplishing her way.

* * *

A day the sun, leaving the beauteous mere, sprang up
into the brazen heaven to give light to the Quendi
and the Atani in Middle-earth, the giver of grain;
and we came to Barádaphel, the well-built citadel of Gondor.

Page 29

So we spoke, but Zorakathôr went down
to the low-roofed storing-chamber of this building,
a dark room below the Street of Smiths.
There we put some stacks of chests, old of oak,
holding within them a mingled odd treasure,
and ranged in order along the wall, if ever Elrandir
should return here after many grievous toils.
Shut were the double doors, close fitted,
by the hero's brother, who promised to watch them.

Page 32

But when we had left that harbour, and no other land appeared,
but only sky and sea, then verily Arien withheld in a black cloud
above the hollow ship, and the sea grew dark beneath it.
She ran on for no long time, for straightway came the shrieking seawind,
blowing with a furious tempest, and the blast of the wind snapped both
the fore-stays of the mast, so that the masts fell backward,
and all its tackling was strewn in the bilge. Then the cloud thundered
and hurled a bolt upon the ship, and she quivered from stem to stern,
and was filled with sulphurous smoke and my comrades fell from the ship.
But I paced the ship till the surge tore the sides from the keel,
and the wave bore her on dismantled and snapped the mast off at the keel;
but over the mast had been flung the back-stay fashioned of ox-hide;
with this I lashed the two together, both keel and mast,
and sitting on these was borne by the direful winds.

Page 33

While I pondered this thus in my mind and heart,
a great wave bore me against the rugged shore.
On I rushed and seized the rock with both hands,
and clung to it groaning, until the great wave went by.

THE FRAGMENTS EXPLAINED

All the fragments, except page 27, are badly damaged and only partially readable.

Page 1: These are the first lines of the poem, starting in a stereotypical way for this kind of epic.

Page 5: This describes an omen of good fortune. It never occurred, being just a case of poetic license.

Page 23: Part of the fight between the adventurers from the *Rising Sun* and Sharg's warriors.

Page 27: This is the only completely intact page. It describes the departure from the coast of Harad and the arrival some days later at a place called Barádaphel. This is a key fragment, since this is the only clue to where the treasure is hidden. However, identifying that place is not easy, since Bergil liked to use obscure references in his writings. Barádaphel (Ad. "Proud Lady") is a poetic name for the city of the gamemaster's choice. It was used during Gondor's early history, but fell out of use around T.A. 800. (If a character is skilled in History or Poetry, he can make a successful absurd static maneuver roll to possess that knowledge). Otherwise, the characters have to visit archives and consult scholars to discover the modern name for the city.

Page 29: Zorakathôr hides part of the treasure in his relative Adrahil's house. The street name is the best way of locating the proper address, but the house does not exist any longer, even though the treasure is there.

Page 32: The demise of the *Rising Sun*. "Arien" is a metaphor for the sun; according to legends, the Sun is guided across the sky by a Maia with this name.

Page 33: Bergil survives the disaster, while all his comrades perish in the sea.

CÔR ARAN SURVEILLANCE

Bergil's house is kept under constant surveillance by five Crows, working shifts. They use a house across the street as their base. The watchers are competent and difficult to spot. The characters would need to make a concerted effort to find them.

The Crows are curious about the characters, since they are newcomers. Previously, they have spotted most of Bergil's friends, all of whom come from Alphaelin. The surveillance is scheduled to be terminated at the end of the week, when the PCs arrive on the scene. The unexpected appearance of the PC's will convince the Crows to check with the Nest archive using the King's Post. If the characters have files at the Nest and remain in Alphaelin when then the response arrives, they will suddenly become prime targets for the Crows. Reinforcements (Team Gray) will be called up to extend the surveillance.

When the leader realizes that the characters are worth monitoring, he will assign that job to Team Gray. The leader is Galad and its other members are Raniel, Beldin, Carnendil, and Iorlas. All are experienced professionals and not easily fooled. They are all in their twenties and thirties and from the general area of Alphaelin, so they easily blend with the locals. Their affiliation with the Côr Aran is not widely known; it was for that reason that they got the assignment.

Team Gray does its best to find out who the player characters are and what they are up to, through such means as bribing innkeepers, checking travel arrangements, etc. However, they avoid approaching known friends ofBergil's, such as Morwen, to minimize the risk of detection.

The team will follow the characters wherever they travel, except that they will not leave Gondor. The Gamemaster must deal with this matter as he sees fit, but the intention is that the characters will be harassed by the Crows' presence during the adventure, ending with some kind of show-down when they are digging for the treasure in Barádaphel. The Crows will avoid direct confrontation with the characters and retreat rather than fight.

If cornered, the Crows will display a surprising amount of swordsmanship and courage. Should the player characters kill members of Team Gray, the Côr Aran will not rest until it revenged itself for its fallen brethren; the organization always retaliates in force in such situations. And the level of organization and communication within the Crows will insure that they will know who is responsible and, most likely, where to find them.

Visiting Bergil's Favorite Tavern

One block from Bergil's home, the characters find his favorite tavern, The Eagle and the Elf. It caters to the locals and the owner, Ianwar, knows all of the regulars. The characters will quickly be identified as strangers, but if they explain the true circumstances surrounding their visit to the area, they will be treated well.

It seems that Bergil was a likable fellow and his friends sincerely mourn his passing. He spent a great deal of time here, telling incredible yarns, playing games of skill, and generally having a good time. However, none can supply any information regarding the expedition or the location of Barádaphel; Bergil did not discuss the important aspects of his past in that much detail. However, the players will hear of Morwen and her role in Bergil's life.

Visiting Morwen the Red

Bergil told Morwen a bit about his participation in Zorakathôr's expedition and she is willing to talk, provided that she is convinced that the characters do not work for the Crows, whom she genuinely detests. She is clever, and if she thinks that the characters are out to make a profit from her information, she will request compensation for her assistance.

Regardless of whether or not she knows the identity of Barádaphel, Morwen knows nothing of Zorakathôr's buried treasure nor has she read "The Lord of the Towers." She knows that Bergil dabbled in writing; after all, he wrote many sentimental (and bad) love poems for her. She appreciated his gesture, though she did not particularly care for the poetry.

Dealing with Meneldor and Túriel

There are two basic approaches to the problem of investigating a house owned by two strangers. Either the characters may act in a criminal way (for instance, by burglarizing the Red House), or they may deal honestly with Meneldor and Túriel. The first method must be handled by the gamemaster, since it will depend entirely on character actions and decisions.

If the characters choose to have a talk with Meneldor and Túriel, they should find them quite helpful, provided that they convince Túriel that they do not serve Castamir (She does not tolerate those kinds of people in her home.). Meneldor is a man with a sense of humor and, when told the story, he is much amused by the idea of having a treasure hidden beneath his house. To him, that sounds like a hearth tale come true.

Meneldor, however, is also a businessman, and first the characters must make a deal with him. He wants half of what is found for his family, while the characters will get the other half. His arguments are based on legal tenets. According to local common law, the finder holds claim over all untitled valuables found on his property. Technically, the characters have no legal title to any of it, but since they gave Meneldor the information, he is prepared to divide the finds. Further, the cost of the excavation job is to be deducted from the treasure before the division is made.

Digging for the Treasure

Once the deal has been made, Meneldor (with the assistance of some characters) will try to locate the hidden store-room. That will not prove unduly difficult, since Meneldor is well skilled in house construction and can easily pinpoint possible points of egress. There will be a lot of tapping of floors in search of cavities and probing with thin steel rods in cracks. After some hours, the most likely site is found, beneath the floor of the living-room, and Meneldor contacts some construction workers he knows. These men will do the hard work.

The digging will take a day or two, after which the construction workers will break through the ceiling of the storage room, located some six feet below the living-room floor. It is filled with the crates, which have to be hauled up with some care.

The treasure in Adrahil's cellar is an unusual one: a large collection of books in old Apysaic, stored in twenty sturdy wooden crates, each measuring 2' by 2' by 3' and weighing about 100 lbs. It is worth a good sum for a serious scholar of that language and of the cultures of the Harad lands. However, finding such a buyer could prove difficult.

The most likely candidate is actually Curunír, who is very interested in the affairs of Men. However, he is not rich in any material sense and he could probably only pay for the collection with information and with promises of future help. The adventurers who once hid the books ripped off their covers, since many of these were decorated with silver filigree and semi-precious stones; quite a sacrilege to anyone with an appreciation of knowledge and learning.

A Gondorian officer addresses a handful of Dunnish mercenaries

SHOWDOWN WITH THE CROWS

The Crows have not been passive during the characters' activities. If Team Gray discovered that the characters were heading for Barádaphel, they may well have arrived in the city before them. After all, the Côr Aran most likely possesses better transportation resources than the characters.

Once the characters are found to have had contact with Túriel—a known dissident—the Crows' suspicions increase. They are convinced that they have found something significant. They start to watch the Red House and prepare a raid. The gamemaster must decide how to stage the raid, based on what has happened earlier in the campaign. If the player characters are reputed to resort to violent behavior, the raid will be strong enough to crush any potential resistance, but if they have a more peaceful record, the Crows will use less resources. The most dramatic choice would be to stage the raid while everyone is busy hauling crates in the living-room.

While planning the raid, the gamemaster should consider the following aspects. The Crows are not interested in fighting or killing anyone; their job is to find out what is going on. Hence they will identify themselves as Côr Aran officers when entering the building, to minimize the risk of violence. After all, any sensible person knows that wounding or killing a Crow is an invitation to personal disaster. At the raid, Túriel is taking care of Thoronion and her (and her husband's) prime objective is to protect their son. They are vehemently opposed to any violence in their house and will get quite angry with the players if they choose to fight.

9.2 ADVENTURE: RATCATCHER

The Kin-strife put a great strain on Gondor's army, and Castamir was hard-pressed to muster experienced troops in greater numbers than the realm could provide. He ordered his commanders to recruit mercenaries (mainly foreign), but these often resorted to plundering for their own coffers at the expense of the rural populace. The Council of Gondor brought this problem to the Usurper's attention (see Section 7.7.1), and he has devised a cunning and (to many Dúnedain) distasteful plan for eradicating these undesirables from his realm.

9.2.1 A TALE OF DEATH AND DISHONOR

In 1441, Castamir believes that the Kin-strife is all but over and that many mercenaries are no longer needed. Some companies have been successfully demobilized, while others have simply gone home of their own accord; but many have turned to marauding and banditry in the less-developed regions of Gondor, such as Calenardhon, eastern Harondor, and Anfalas. The King's army has occasionally come to blows with the more aggressive of these groups, but the marauders (usually more familiar with their chosen terrain) simply flee, disperse or hide when confronted. A major military effort would therefore be required to cleanse these areas and, as long as Eldacar is still alive and less than completely defeated, Castamir disapproves of committing Dúnadan troops to such ventures.

The Usurper's solution to the mercenary problem has been to advertise a bogus military campaign against one of the Daen clans of Dunfearan with the intention of leading unsuspecting mercenaries on a wild goose-chase to their doom. Castamir has commissioned a contingent of regular troops under experienced leadership to lead (and eventually abandon) this rag-tag mercenary army in hostile clan territory, where they are likely to perish without supplies. If some harm is done to the troublesome Daen in the process, all the better.

Othir Borondir and the military authorities in Minas Anor have issued a call to these mercenaries for a campaign against Clan Leonn of Dunfearan. The official pretext is a three hundred year-old insult from a Leonn chief who named the men of Gondor "unmanly cowards and kin-slayers" (the latter being a dire insult among the Daen—and ironically prophetic in light of the Kin-strife). Reports of cattle theft attributed to Daen raiders in westernmost Calenardhon have provided a secondary justification for Borondir, who claims that the thieves have been identified as members of Clan Leonn (though this has not yet been established beyond a reasonable doubt).

9.2.2 THE NPCS

LIEUTENANT FARAMIR (1385-1512)

Faramir is a veteran of many battles, but lacks experience as a troop commander and cannot offer sound tactical advice. Faramir's outspoken support for the Usurper stems from the fact that his family is held hostage by the Côr Aran, who have ordered him to keep an eye on the characters and report to two Crows among the Dúnadan soldiers.

Faramir is convinced there are more Crows among the troops, but under no circumstances will he risk the lives of his family. Faramir feels no loyalty to the Côr Aran; and should the characters make a good impression on him, he may avoid helping the Crows if he can do so without risking raising any suspicions. He may, for instance, "accidentally" allow the characters to overhear his report to the Crows, thereby warning them to guard their tongues in his presence.

Faramir is a tall and muscular warrior of obvious Dúnadan lineage. He is gray-haired, brown-eyed and possesses a military stance. His dress is always impeccable since he is very careful in displaying his social status. He is clearly a person who sees the world in rational and calculating terms.

TORGIR (1402-1489)

Torgir is a competent Daen torturer who knows how to inflict enough pain to break any captive and can tell when this point has been reached. Torgir carries out his duties impassively, will give a detailed report whenever he is asked to perform an interrogation.

Torgir is a broad-shouldered and muscular man of medium height, with brown hair and brown eyes. He is always dressed discreetly and prefers brown and black. His emotions are stunted; he rarely, if ever, feels empathy or sorrow. His demeanor is quiet and balanced and he is literally incapable of losing his temper. Although neither a "man of ice" nor a sadist, Torgir cannot understand (or, rather, pretends not to understand) why many people find his line of work appalling.

LORD ALANDUR

Alandur will gladly offer advice to the characters on the current state of affairs in Calenardhon. If he realizes that the campaign is a ploy, he will not disclose this knowledge, but might use it to blackmail the characters if he considers them troublesome. Alandur has a variety of cunning poisons at his disposal for dealing with annoying individuals (see Section 9.4). All in all, however, he is mostly interested in maintaining the status quo. (See Section 2.2.1 for more details.)

COMMANDER FINLONG

Finlong is basically well-inclined and can give plenty of useful information on the clans of Dunfearan. He strongly suggests the use of diplomacy to prevent the clans from uniting against the expedition. Finlong certainly does not want the host to stay too long at Aglarond.

Finlong is a Dúnadan of Lebennin, which is visible in his looks and attitudes. He is tall, brown-haired, gray-eyed and handsome. He is a military man and has acquired the habit of talking to everyone of less than his social standing as if that person is an underling. Hence, he can be quite insufferable at times. (See Section 9.4 for more details.)

THRANGIR (1417-1461)

Thrangir is a Daen guide who will be assigned to the characters. Secretly, Thrangir is a servant of the Temple of Justice, whose mission is to increase enmity towards the mercenary host by leading it to commit atrocities against the clans. It is not in his masters' interest that the Gondorian host should be defeated quickly, and Thrangir may thus occasionally help the characters.

He may, for instance, betray the location of fleeing Daen to the troops in order to ensure that clansfolk are slaughtered. Should Thrangir's mission (or even the fact that a representative of the Temple is assisting the Gondorian invaders) be discovered by other Daen, the Temple's reputation will be badly damaged. Hence, Thrangir is prepared to maintain secrecy by any means necessary.

Thrangir is a squat, swarthy Daen with black hair and brown eyes. He is dressed in the rough style of his tribe. He speaks fairly good Westron and pretends to do his best to help the adventurers on their mission. However, he is a good actor and is able to fake most emotions convincingly. The nature of his true allegiance makes him tight-lipped.

CHIEF RALTIN (1420-1462)

Raltin is the chieftain of Clan Leonn (see Section 9.2.5). Though basically an intelligent person, he can easily be provoked to rash acts and often considers his sword (which won him his chiefdom) to be the solution to any and all problems; Raltin is nevertheless dedicated to his clan's well-being and will even give up his precious pride in order to avoid imminent destruction. He will be eager to battle the Gondorian host before it reaches Leonn territory but, if defeated, he will withdraw and resort to guerrilla tactics.

Raltin is tall for a Daen and very muscular. His hair is brown and the eyes are greenish. He considers it important to dress and act as the chieftain he is, but his temper is short, and he is quick to take offense for any real or perceived slight.

THE DAEN LINTIS

Some fifteen Daen clans (many of which are semi-nomadic) live by farming, herding, and hunting along the foothills of the Misty Mountains south of the Glanduin. Their political fragmentation and instinctive hatred for centralized authority often leads to conflict between clans, or the division of a single clan into sub-clans. In most cases, the chief of a clan is chosen by non-lethal combat, while in others the position is hereditary.

Daen warriors are brave, individualistic, boastful and proud, and are keen on displaying these qualities in battle by taunting and humiliating their enemies. By contrast, their discipline and grasp of tactics is almost non-existent and the quality of their weapons is generally poor. The Daen typically wear leather armor, and are equipped with a motley collection of spears, short bows, halberds, and axes. Only the richest and most prominent warriors own chainmail and fight from horseback or chariots. Both males and females are trained for war.

The Daen worship a pantheon of gods based on the Valar through oral tradition. However, many tribes are influenced by the so-called "Temple of Justice," a creation of Angmar whose purpose is to unify the Daen against their subjection to Gondor, which lays claim to Enedwaith. The Witch-king's intention is to use the Temple as a mouthpiece for his plans for the region. He hopes to set the tribes of Dunfearan working to sever the strengthened ties between Tharbad and the South-kingdom along the River Gwathló, by which King Araphor is supplied in his struggle against Angmar.

9.2.3 THE SETTINGS

The Misty Mountains form the eastern border of Dunfearan. Their peaks reach ten thousand feet and create an almost impassable barrier. Streams coming down from the mountains provide water to the foothills, allowing agriculture and pasturage. The foothills are rough, and large parts are covered by copses or forests. However, the terrain southwest of the forest of Choil Caerdh is flatter and more open. This is a good area for herding and is home to many Daen (among them Clan Leonn) and will probably become the focus of the adventure. The only road in the area—the South Road leading to Tharbad and Arthedain—runs straight through this potential war-zone.

9.2.4 THE TASK

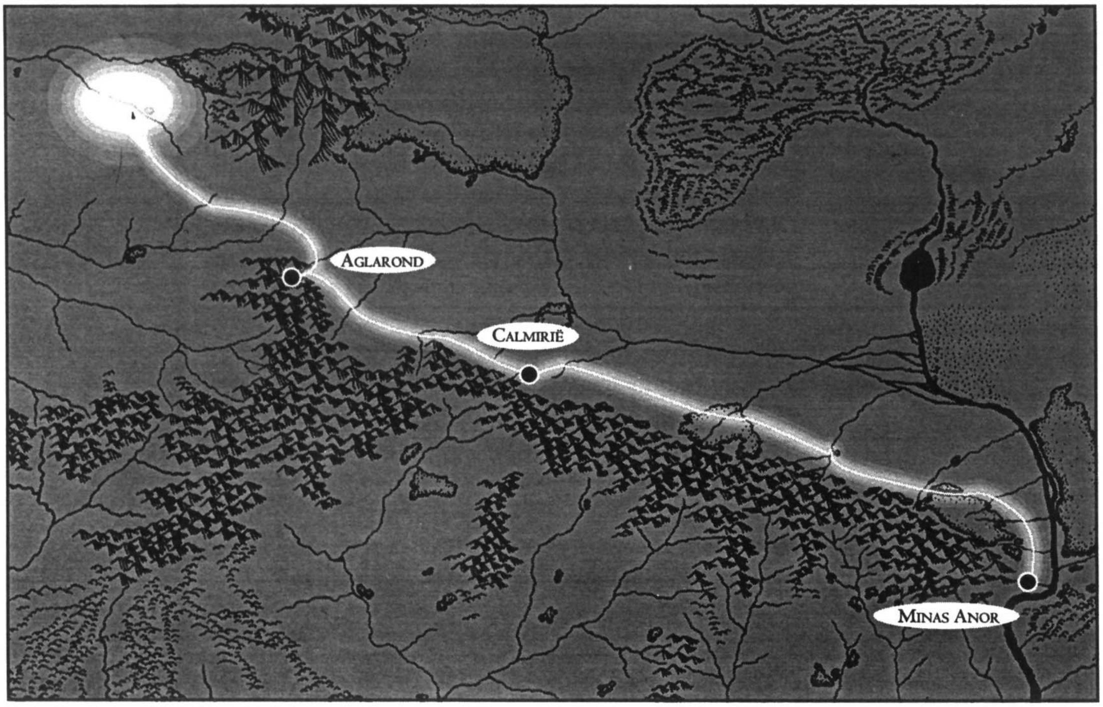
Of course, the player characters are the ones who will have the unpalatable duty of leading this false campaign. They will face a variety of obstacles to the plan and encounter a few moral dilemmas. Hopefully, the characters will accept the job, realizing that fooling the marauders into this trap is—although certainly dishonorable—the lesser of two evils.

Characters must keep the mercenaries from discovering the true purpose of their campaign. Shrewd and/or heavy-handed responses may prove necessary on several occasions during which the secret will be threatened. Though the whole campaign is basically a hoax, it will nevertheless require competent military leadership to damage the troublesome Daen, and evading the ever-present danger of clans uniting against them may also demand some cunning diplomacy. In order to make their recruitment plausible, at least one of the characters (preferably a noble) should have military experience.

Dúnadan characters will face the moral dilemma of having to lie repeatedly to their own troops, and may often be forced to choose between several evils. Because truthspeaking is an important virtue to the Dúnedain, only the most unscrupulous of characters will sit comfortably in their role as captains of this unruly host, even though the deception may be necessary in order to save their countrymen from further atrocities.

By confronting characters with the sufferings of relatives, old friends, or former allies at the hands of the marauders, sufficient motivation for their involvement in the mission may be found to outweigh its otherwise dishonorable and profitless nature. The moral dimension will be stressed by having the characters do what they do out of conviction and compassion rather than money.

This is not a story of a heroic struggle of good against evil, but rather of balancing the necessities of duty against the dictates of conscience (though heroism need not be entirely absent). It is suggested that the gamemaster portray the Daen as almost mindlessly heroic (and somewhat honorable) in defending their homeland, in stark contrast to the characters' nasty mission. The atmosphere in this adventure should be full of cynicism, deceit and human suffering. The gamemaster should emphasize how the ideals of Gondor have decayed. Though this adventure presumes that the characters have basically noble intentions (ridding the countryside of marauders), they will hardly be the "good guys."



The Expedition Route

Starting the Characters

The player characters have relatives and/or friends living in an area currently being ravaged by ex-mercenary brigands. The Kin-strife had made it impossible to maintain contact with them for some time, but now that the fighting has dwindled, the characters learn that their loved-ones are dead, poverty-stricken from plundering, or homeless. In order to reclaim their land, the characters are asked to eliminate the local marauders, and eventually they will find that new ones move in when the old ones have been eliminated.

The characters' successful retribution catches the eye of their patron-to-be (whom they should know already), who congratulates them in the spirit of "one marauder band down, roughly two hundred and ninety-three to go." He explains that they stand no chance of solving this problem alone and explains to them his solution. He seeks to persuade them to lead Borondir's campaign, which is currently being mobilized in Minas Anor.

At Minas Anor the characters are introduced to Faramir, a veteran officer of the army, who is to be their lieutenant. He will immediately brief them on the campaign plans, after which the characters will be asked to make a few decisions. The call for troops has been very successful and he estimates that they will have roughly five thousand men within two months. He suggests that waiting longer is unlikely to yield much more troops and would be costly. They already have a company of eight hundred Variag infantry from Khand and a hundred and fifty Sagath light cavalry, which was to be disbanded until the Usurper thought it better to enlist them for the Dunfearan campaign. Castamir has also offered three hundred Gondorian line infantry (which are not to be sacrificed).

Should characters choose to admit the Dúnadan infantry unit into the ranks of their host, they are obliged to bring it back (which would slow their escape from Dunfearan). But Faramir suggests the characters accept the offer, since they will need a core of disciplined and loyal troops to create stability, act as bodyguards and watch over supplies and salaries.

The characters must decide whether to allow camp followers. These are hangers-on to the mercenary units, consisting of dependents, servants and prostitutes. If allowed, the army must provide for them (which will increase the cost of the campaign, but it will also increase the morale of the troops). Furthermore, if camp followers are not allowed, it will decrease the number of mercenaries who will apply by at least a tenth. The patron's view on the matter will be indifferent: "I certainly don't mind if you rid Gondor of this foreign riffraff, but on the other hand they aren't much of a nuisance either. Do what you consider gives the mission the best chance of succeeding."

Characters will be responsible for establishing arbitration norms and procedures in matters of justice, and must appoint military judges or assume that role themselves. In an off-hand manner, Faramir adds that the King has provided them with an expert torturer (Torgir) who is acquainted with the language and customs of the Daen. He will also provide the characters with basic information about Dunfearan and its clans.

Aids

Player characters will face problems in which personal skill at arms, deduction and squad-level tactics will be of little use. Instead, characters require moral integrity, shrewd double-dealing (yes, there is a contradiction in this) diplomatic skill, and some operational planning ability.

Note: *Faramir is to be the gamemaster's voice for players unfamiliar with a military situation like this.*

The Southron host (1,300)

Culcamalin: 400 archers, 400 cavalry

Karan: 300 archers, 200 cavalry

250 Southron light infantry (good for scouting and harassing the enemy but are likely to break in close-in fighting with the Daen).

4,200 Variag infantry, organized in seven companies of equal size (skilled veterans, morale is high, discipline is low)

250 Sagath light cavalry (very good at scouting, carrying messages and harassing the enemy. May also be used to attack flanks but will break if faced with superior odds. These troops are a problem since they can move faster than the Gondorians and thus pose a threat when the host is abandoned. This problem could be overcome by sending them out on a long-range reconnaissance mission just before disappearing.)

300 Gondorian infantry (one company, disciplined, reliable and battle-hardened. Very good at defending a position against superior odds).

Obstacles

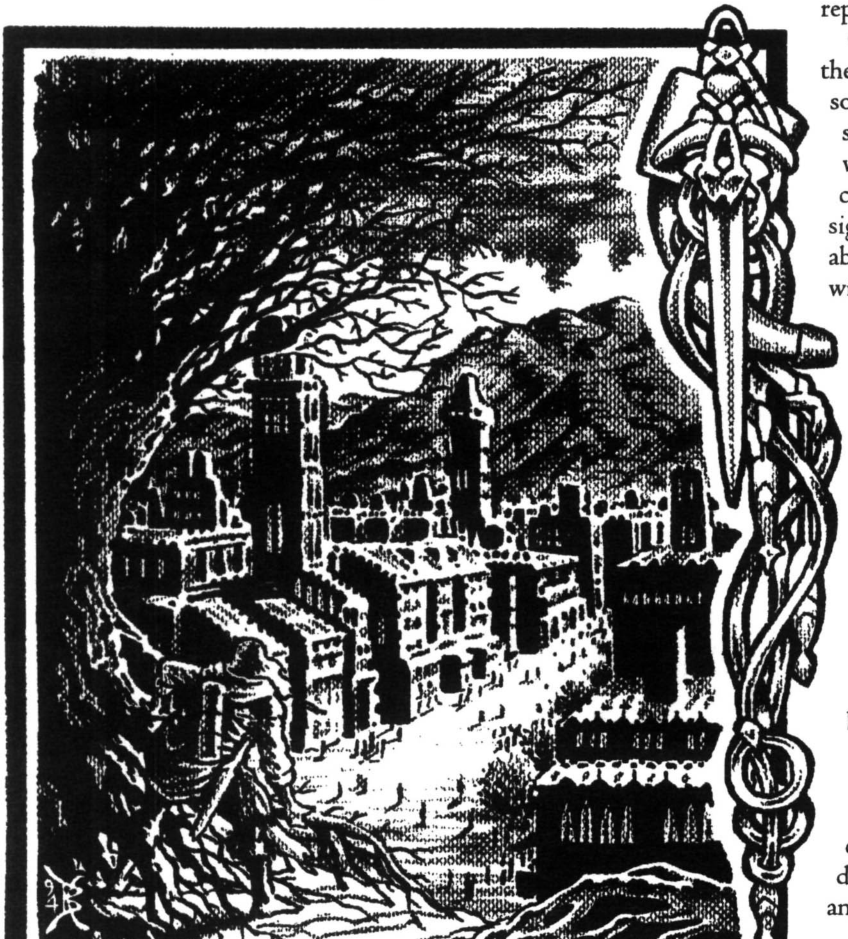
The characters receive enough gold to buy a year's worth of provisions for the host, but just prior to the march three-fourths of this will be secretly removed and replaced with stones (The characters are, of course, informed of this.). Thus, they are given three months to complete their mission. Once unable to pay their troops, they will be in trouble.

Characters will need to conduct diplomacy with some of the major clans in order to prevent the Daen from uniting against their host. The most important task will be to allay the chieftains' fears that conquest of Daen land is the object of their expedition. The Daen Lintis distrust the men of Gondor, and clan chieftains will refuse to enter their camp. They will instead send envoys to learn of their intentions, whom characters must convince that the host will limit itself to the punishment of Clan Leonn for its cattle raiding.

Because their official opponents have no great enemies among the clans, there is little chance of gaining any overt allies among the Daen, unless characters should succeed in concocting evidence of perfidy among the Leonn leaders. If so, they must "prove" that the Leonn have in some way violated clan laws or have allied themselves with enemies of the Daen, such as Orcs of the Misty Mountains or Dwarves of Khazad-dûm. The Daen (especially those clans that are influenced by the Temple of Justice) are not above using negotiations to capture enemy leaders. Exchange of hostages is probably the best way of constraining Daen leaders to parley.

The only way of making Clan Leonn surrender is by bringing them to the edge of starvation through the destruction of property, or by killing so many warriors that they risk losing the ability to defend themselves against other clans. Either course of action entails dishonorable tactics, such as burning villages and crops, or slaughtering cattle. The terrible price of victory may ring quite hollow to the Dúnadan leaders of the host. Attempts to burn pasture land will be ineffective as the sturdy grass is quite resistant to fire and will regrow quickly; such a strategy may, moreover, convince other clans that the same violence will be directed against all Daen, which may lead to a clan alliance against the invaders.

Calmirië



OUTCOMES

This adventure is completely open-ended and requires a lot of initiative from the players and the ability to improvise from the gamemaster. It is not possible to predict the outcome of the campaign against the Daen: it can range from a decisive victory to the utter destruction the players' host. The adventure is over when the characters return home.

Perhaps they can bring some of the plunder with them, though little of value is to be found in Dunfearan. Worse yet, fidelity to one's word is considered one of the most important Dúnadan virtues. Even though most people may think the characters did the right thing, they will be considered dishonorable and untrustworthy by many.

The only true reward of the adventure is the feeling of having done the right thing. Perhaps they should be seeking their luck somewhere else for a while. The ultimate payoff would be to actually defeat Clan Leonn and return victorious, turning the hoax into a true and successful campaign, though this is an extremely unlikely event. It is suggested the gamemaster does not let the patron offer the characters any monetary or other material reward (The gamemaster may, however, wish to give them normal officer salaries or even something more generous, since this adventure is likely to give the characters a bad reputation.).

Characters may at any time choose to abandon the host and return quickly with the Gondorian soldiers (For logistical reasons, the whole host is seldom gathered at one place.). The Gondorians will be upset by such a decision, but Faramir can calm them by showing a document bearing the signature of Castamir. It contains a clear order to abandon the mercenaries in Dunfearan. The troops will feel ashamed of this and morale will sink to a low level, but they will have little choice but to obey their commander. Without a leader to assume command in the characters' absence, the mercenary units will soon become disordered.

Unless completely defeated, the Daen will gather anew to root out the mercenaries. The Sagath horsemen will try to get back to Calenardhon, while the Variags prefer to try for Tharbad. The Southrons will just fade away westwards into the wilderness, splitting up into small companies to lessen the chance of discovery. All mercenary contingents will suffer bad losses during their retreats and only a few soldiers will reach safety, thus ensuring the success of the characters' primary task.

The Daen may also attack the retreating characters and their followers, making extraction difficult. The Daen are probably quite vengeful and may pursue the Gondorians for a long time.

Being mounted, the Daen are also likely to move faster than the Gondorian infantry. Thus the characters will have to get out of Dunfearan before the natives realize what is going on (quite a tricky feat) or try a less obvious route home to avoid being found.

Clan Dobac will send a mounted force towards the Fords of the Angren to cut off retreating infantry, provided that its chieftain has reliable information on the military developments. The Aglarond garrison is a bit too far away to intervene effectively, and Finlong does not want to send a force across the Angren. On the other hand, the Daen will not cross the river since that would constitute an attack on Gondor proper.

Passing through the Misty Mountains to Angrenost is a sure way to avoid being followed, but extremely risky (being infested with trolls and Orcs). It is also a very strenuous route that is impossible for individuals unused to the hardships of the wilderness (i.e., most women and children). Another, somewhat easier route is to the southwest through Drúwaith Iaur, either to Lond Angreh by the coast to arrange a naval evacuation, or through Ered Nimrais to Anfalas. However, it is quite a distance in both cases and there may not be enough supplies.

The gamemaster may add some difficulties to the retreat. If the characters turned down the Gondorian soldiers' request to bring along their dependents, the gamemaster may decide that they have smuggled some along anyhow by hiding them among the camp followers. The soldiers will not leave these individuals behind, even refusing to obey if ordered to do so.

9.2.5 ENCOUNTERS

The gamemaster is urged to make the most of the long journey to Dunfearan, introducing the characters to new places. In this way, the gamemaster can also give hints about and provide preludes to future adventures. This part of the campaign should prove generally uneventful, since Anórien and Calenardhon are civilized parts of the realm. The host marches between twenty and twenty-five miles each day.

Minas Anor

The characters must spend about two months inspecting and organizing the troops that gather for the campaign. This is quite dull and should not pose any major problems (It need not be role-played.). However a few incidents and decisions could be interesting. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Quarrels between the different groups of mercenaries. The bored soldiers insult each other constantly, and duels and less formal fights will be common.
2. Some Sagath horsemen are furious when they find out that some of their rations contain horsemeat, which breaks an important taboo. Some may actually have eaten it, not knowing what it was and are now intent on murdering the cooks who failed to warn them.
3. The Variag war leaders do not like the thought of fighting under the command of a foreigner and non-kinsman. They ask a commanding character and his or her closest aide to become their blood-brothers and/or perhaps even arrange a suitable marriage to enforce the bond of brothers-in-arms. Refusing the offer would cause some small resentment and suspicion, but accepting it will make the characters betrayal-to-come even more villainous.
4. If the characters have allowed camp-followers, a few Gondorian regulars will ask if they too may bring some of their dependents (The army usually provides for the dependents of the regulars, but the war and Castamir's lack of interest has left some of these homeless.). If the characters accept the request, it will be more troublesome to abandon the troops. On the other hand, the Gondorians will definitely resent a "no."
5. If camp followers have been allowed, some prostitutes or servants may try to seduce male characters, thinking that being mistress of a high-ranking officer is a good meal-ticket.

Calmírë (Day 7)

The host will reach Calmirië about a week after leaving Minas Anor. It will be well received by Lord Alandur, though the troops are not allowed to enter the town armed. The host commanders are invited to an informal dinner at Alandur's residence. During the event, Alandur will carefully attempt to determine if there are any secrets behind the overt claims of fighting the Daen for an old insult and some cattle rustling, causes he finds pretty implausible.

A major desertion in Calmirië will call for an effort to deter others. The characters will have to let their soldiers search the city. They must convince Alandur to allow them to bring troops to the city to find the deserters. Since only mercenaries have deserted (no Gondorians), they stick out from the rest of the population and finding them should not be too tricky. However, they are quite likely to do anything they can to avoid being discovered since they know they will be harshly punished if they are caught.

When the host is about to leave Calmirië, a group representing the Variags ask for an extra day off. They claim that today is an important seasonal holiday according to their traditions. They must light candles and leave small offerings of flowers to commemorate their ancestors (and perhaps have some beer to commemorate the ancestors, of course). The group will rant about all the terrible things that will happen to them and the host if they do not spend this day appeasing their ancestors. As might be guessed, the Variags are lying and just want a day off, but the players will not know that unless they are familiar with Variag customs.

AGLAROND (DAY 16)

The host reaches the Gap of Calenardhon, beyond which stretches the uncivilized territory of Enedwaith and barbaric Dunfearan. The host is encamped in the vale of Aglarond, in front of Ostiras. Othir Finlong, has been asked by Faramir to acquire a few native guides. Thus, he presents three men from clan Madoc, which is an enemy of Clan Leonn. Unknown to him, one of these, Thrangir, is a servant of the Temple of Justice (see 9.2.2). If well paid, they will swear loyalty to the host commander.

THE EAVESDROPPER

A young servant is caught overhearing the characters mentioning the fact that they will leave the troops or some other incriminating fact. The boy denies he heard anything but is obviously lying. The characters will have to decide how to either insure the boy's silence or take the chance of him revealing their secret.

THE GHOSTS

Some Variags spread demoralizing rumors of Daen rising from the dead to fight for their kinsmen. If carefully examined, none have actually seen this but two Variags did see Daen ghosts two years ago. (Such hauntings are a consequence of their curse after breaking their oath to the Dúnedain at the end of the Second Age).

THE THIEVES

A dozen Sagath horsemen try to steal the "treasury" of the host. The plan should be pretty straightforward, trying to take out the guards silently if there are less than five and relying on speed and surprise otherwise. Unfortunately, their greed has gotten the better of their intelligence and they will try to take all the money (which is rather heavy) and they underestimate the guards' combat skills. Hence, they are not likely to get away with the loot, but the fact that most of the treasury is missing might be discovered, putting the characters in an embarrassing situation.

THE CLANS

All the way through Dunfearan the host encounters ambitious Daen warriors eager to insult and challenge a few opponents to one-on-one combat to prove their prowess and courage. They ride up to the marching host, staying out of javelin range, and taunt the mercenaries. The troops, especially the Variags, are eager to respond to the challenges. Unfortunately, the challenging Daen are good fighters and will decimate and demoralize the host if their activities are allowed to go on.

Faramir warns the characters that some Daen warriors are far more skilled at combat than the characters, and that they should find some excuse not to fight without losing face in front of the troops. Claiming to have direct orders from Castamir forbidding them to enter personal combat would do the trick.

Note: *The combat system provided in Section 10.6 is useful, but players interested in tactical challenges should use the more detailed system described in War Law or a set of table-top rules.*

When the Daen do battle against the Gondorian host, its captains can easily exploit their enemy's weaknesses. The Daen warriors fight in hordes of fifty rather than in ordered formations, have little sense of tactics and will be eager to plunder fallen opponents (good weapons are very precious here), even fighting among themselves in the middle of a battle over who is to get the plunder.

Defeating a clan is quite a difficult task, and quite unlike war in a civilized land, Among the Daen, all youths and adults are warriors, whose will to resist may be strengthened by defeat. Also, there is no clear geographic goal whose conquest will give victory. However, even the mercenaries are far more disciplined and skilled in mass combat than the Daen. The careful application of force and tactics will yield far better results than a series of head-on clashes that will only serve to meet the Daen on their own terms.

Clan Leonn

(population: 10,000; warriors: 2,000)

As soon as Raltin learns of the objective of the invading host, he will muster a force of thirty-two hundred Daen warriors from Clan Leonn and its allies, offering battle from a favorable position (which will be reasonably easy, since he has far better knowledge of the local terrain than the invaders; on the other hand, agents of the Temple will work to offset this advantage by leaking information to the characters through Thrangir). Most of Clan Leonn fight from chariots.

Should the host manage to defeat Raltin's army, surviving Leonn warriors will attempt to evade the victors. Most are herders and can simply move away at a speed nearly equal to that of the Gondorian host. Furthermore they will utilize their knowledge of the terrain to hide and harass the enemy. This will especially enrage the Variags, whose cruelty will increase as time passes. If non-combatant Leonn are found by mercenaries, the soldiers will rape and plunder in the traditional mercenary manner. There is little the characters can do to stop the Variags from such savagery. The longer the campaign continues, the angrier the other clans get. They will eventually throw their lot in with Clan Leonn to get rid of the ravaging mercenaries.

Clan Arailt

(population: 3,000; warriors: 500)

The most warlike of the clans and the main supporter of the Temple of Justice. They have an intense hatred for the men of Gondor and are not to be trusted in negotiations. Clan Arailt will provide aid to clan Leonn on a volunteer basis. They will deny the host passage through their territory, harassing it intensively if it makes any attempt to move through anyway.

Clan Dobac
(population: 1,500)

The southernmost of the Daen clans, living just northwest of the Fords of the Angren. The characters' host cannot avoid encountering its scouts. Dobac is friendly to Leonn, and if the clan's scouts discern the objective of the host they will immediately send couriers to Raltin. However, the clan will not fight the Gondorians unless provoked, since the chieftain, despite detesting Gondor, wants to protect his people's herds and fields. After all, the host marches past clan Dobac's lands before reaching clan Leonn. When the characters return towards Gondor, they may have a lot of trouble with this clan, since the warriors will wish to avenge the losses of the Leonn and they may then see the odds as more favorable.

Clan Feargan
(population: 5,000)

The largest clan in Dunfearan whose word carries weight even among the most contrary clans. Clan Feargan's leader, Eldwen the Rememberer (the latter being an honorific term to denote the fact that he has memorized a prodigious number of songs and stories), is a careful man and will send envoys to talk with the characters as soon as he hears of their crossing of the Angren.

The envoys will ask the cause of the war and will try to determine if the troops really intend to attack only the Leonn. Unless he considers the host a treat to all Daen clans, Eldwen will stay neutral and offer the characters the use of his capital, Larach Duhnan, as a neutral meeting ground in negotiations. He will be responsible for maintaining the peace during such negotiations, a responsibility he will take very seriously.

Clan Madoc
(population: 3,000; host: 500)

The enemies of clan Leonn, but are also supporters of the Temple of Justice. They will send a host of warriors to fight for Clan Leonn, but obeying secret instructions from the Temple of Justice, they will betray the location of Leonn troops and other secrets to Maben's emissaries. They will pass this information to Thrangir to increase the bloodshed and deepen the hatred between Gondorians and Daen.

Clan Sonmar
(population: 2,000; host: 200)

Excellent horse-breeders and friends of Clan Leonn. They will send a host of mounted warriors to harass the Gondorian host, but will keep most of their troops to safeguard their homes.

9.3 ADVENTURE: THE PALE RIDERS

The Usurper has a standing reward for the capture of his exiled rival and enemy, Eldacar. Few in Gondor, however, have been able to contemplate such a deed, given the King of Rhovanion's declaration of war on Castamir (which makes open military ventures into the north perilous). Nevertheless, there are those who would gladly risk the danger to win the prize for Eldacar's head—if only they knew where he was hiding.

9.3.1 A TALE OF HEAD HUNTERS AND MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Eldacar's presence has recently been revealed to an evil-minded Sagath chieftain, whose warriors captured and tortured to death one of the exiled King's couriers. Knowing that Eldacar's death would bring a handsome reward from the Usurper in arms and horses, the chieftain has charged three assassins (and a scout) to Buhr Widu to "find this Gondorian Lord and bring to me his head!"

Slovas, Evit, Guton, and Mahrbrand face one major problem: nobody in the tribe knows what Eldacar really looks like, since none has met him personally nor has seen his picture. The tortured courier could only give a general description. Somehow, they must obtain a proper description of the exiled King; it would not do to bring the wrong head to Castamir. Being easily identified as Easterlings by any Northman, the Sagath warriors cannot enter Buhr Widu. Instead, with the help of the scout, the trio must intercept their prey when he is outside the protection of the fortified town. They know that if they are detected by the Northmen, they will hounded to death before getting any chance of striking. Hence, they must hide their true identities. Dressing like a Northman is quite easy. However, the three warriors speak only their native Sagath language and some broken Eothrik, forcing them to abstain from approaching any Northmen. If they travel during the night and hide during the day, they will have less chance of being spotted.

The quartet made a simple and cruel plan for their mission, realizing that the operation had to rely on speed and force. The Easterlings would attempt to capture and interrogate a resident from the vicinity of Buhr Widu in order to obtain a description of Eldacar. Mahrbrand would then enter the town to get a closer look at the intended victim while the three Easterlings wait nearby in a hidden camp. After a day or two, Mahrbrand will return with a proper description of Eldacar.

The assassins believe that the King must sooner or later leave the town with some followers, if only for hunting or riding. There they will strike with surprise and skill.

The plan has one fatal flaw: the possibility that the information they torture out of the captured Northman will be incorrect. Torture is a crude and unreliable method, since the victim gets incoherent from pain and he usually tells the interrogators what he thinks they want to hear just to end the sufferings.

9.3.2 THE NPCS

Mahrbrand (1415-1487)

Mahrbrand is a petty and egotistical Ailgarthas who quickly gained a reputation for greed and dishonesty. He was banished from his tribe for stealing. Mounting his horse and riding south in search of a better future in Gondor at the age of twenty-two, Mahrbrand was captured by the Sagath chieftain Yobod, who compelled the renegade Ailgarthas to betray the secrets of his former clansmen in exchange for his life. Since then, Mahrbrand has lived a cringing life at the whim of his captors by advising Yobod in his dealings with the Northmen. Mahrbrand gladly accepted this mission, since he hates his compatriots and wants revenge. He serves as the team's scout.

Mahrbrand is tall (5'11") and skinny with fair hair and blue eyes. He normally dresses in Sagath garb, but cannot hide his Northman origin.

Wulfr (1409-1476)

Wulfr is a Woodman trapper who periodically sojourns in Buhr Widu. He secretly serves the Necromancer, who receives tidings from him concerning the progress of Eldacar's activities. Wulfr's objective is (ironically) to preserve the exiled King from harm, given Sauron's belief that only Eldacar's return to Gondor will bring about the division of the South-kingdom's military might. Because Wulfr is directly connected to Dol Guldur, avoidance of discovery is his chief goal; hence, his support of Eldacar is for the most part restricted to acting as an informant by way of King Vidurafin.

Wulfr is a passive agent, whose top priority is to keep his true mission secret. He will never do anything that can risk his cover. However, Sauron wants Eldacar to survive and keep on fighting Castamir. Hence, Wulfr will behave as a true loyalist and he will gladly pass on useful information to the Huithyn to help Eldacar's cause.

Wulfr was born in a Northman tribe living in the Greenwood. As a youngster, he became more and more withdrawn and shunned close contacts with others. Eventually, he could not stand the village life and left for the solitude of the forest. In 1430, he wandered south and was captured by the Necromancer's servants. Sauron used his will to subvert the Northman's mind and turned him to his service. However, Wulfr has no idea of the identity of the strange power that re-shaped his life. He believes his master to be some kind of ancient forest spirit, whose aim is to protect his Greenwood domain from the intrusions of Men and Elves. Since 1431, Wulfr has served as a roving spy, traveling up and down the Greenwood while successfully using the cover of a fur trapper. He is very good at his profession and earns his living easily.

Wulfr is tall (6'1") and slim, and with blond hair and blue eyes. His demeanor is quiet and withdrawn and it is nearly impossible to get to know him. He is an clear loner with no real ties to anyone. If interrogated, he will not talk. With the will of the Necromancer behind him, he has the mental strength to endure the most sophisticated methods of torture. He dresses as a hunter, in green and brown hues, usually carrying a bow and a dagger.

The Sagath

Sagath and their Logath relatives live on the plains around the Sea of Rhûn. Currently, there are two Sagath tribes living in eastern Rhovanion Harroch, south of Dorwinion. They are semi-nomadic, migrating from one temporary campsite to another with great and stout wooden wains. For that reason, they are also known as Wainriders.

Sagath settlements are no more than fortified camps on hillocks. They are surrounded by a wooden stockade. The lodgings consist of large hide tents. When on the move, the Sagath use their wains to form a circle around their tents in a protective "wall" of a sort.

The Sagath culture is warlike and cruel by Gondorian standards. The people serve Darkness and worship in the Cult of the Black One as taught by the tribal shamans. The cult requires grisly sacrifice and many Northmen have met their ends at the hands of the cruel shamans. Hence, there is a natural enmity between the Sagath and the Free Peoples.

All adult men are warriors. They fight either on horseback or from rugged two-wheeled chariots drawn by a pair of horses. A chariot crew consists of one driver and one fighter. The Sagath are excellent archers and they also use spears and javelins. They usually wear rigid or soft leather armor, since the only way to obtain a chainmail is to capture from their western foes. The Sagath are renowned as brave and cruel warriors and have become both hated and feared by Rhovanion Harroch's Northman tribes and Gondorian settlers, since pillage and plunder is an integral part of the Easterling way of life.

Slovas (1407-1441†)

Slovas is a short and stocky brown-haired Sagath. He is dressed in an Éothraim style. His eyes are cold and he speaks rarely but carefully.

Evit (1408-1441†)

Evit is a short and stocky black-haired Sagath. He is dressed in an Éothraim style. His black moustache is bushy and goes down below the mouth, giving him an unusually fearsome appearance. His black eyes are perceptive and darts from object to object.

Guton (1409-1441†)

Guton is a short and stocky brown-haired Sagath. He is dressed in an Éothraim style. His face is a mass of scars, acquired when he was captured by another Sagath tribe and subjected to torture. Due to the scarring, his face does not reveal any emotions whatsoever.

9.3.3 THE SETTINGS

Buhr Widu

(winter population: 400,
summer population: 300)

The population of Buhr Widu diminishes over the summer months while many of its able-bodied men are away with the herds, while the remaining tend the fields in the area. All permanent residents belong to the Waildungs, and most are relatives of the Huithyn. Sojourners from other tribes and lands often visit the town. Peddlers come with their wagons to sell products of Dorwinion and other distant places, while Woodsmen barter pelts for hides or leather armor. Before the Kin-strife, the Waildungs also traded with Gondor, exchanging horses for sophisticated weapons and armor.

Forest Hold is the capital of the Waildungs, the most powerful of the Éothraim tribes. Tucked in the East Bight, between the Greenwood and the escarpment called High Hand, it is a well-protected settlement. The town is ideally suited to its role as stronghold of the Waildung princes, as it is situated on a trio of hills, linked by earthworks, overlooking the Mere of Roots. The Men-in-Araw ends at the eastern gate into Buhr Widu. On the western side of the town, another trail begins, crossing the Greenwood and reaching the Anduin at the Gladden Fields, giving Eldacar a line of communication with his Anduin Squadron. The town consists mainly of wooden longhouses, with a few stone buildings designed for special purposes.

1. The Golden Hall. Home of Huithyn Vidurafin, the leader of the Éothraim people and of the Waildung tribes. It is an imposing two-story wooden building which display all the trappings of power desired by a Northman Prince.

2. The Hall of Princes. Used by visiting Huithynas and Thynas.

3. The Second Hall. South of the Golden Hall, the Second Hall is home to the Huithyn's eldest son. The current occupant is Vidurafn's son Vidustain. This is also the current residence of Eldacar.

4. Mill.

5. Armory.

6. Sacred Hall.

9.3.4 THE TASK

The task of this adventure is to avoid falling victim to the Sagath headhunters. The adventure may serve as a prop to let the player characters meet Eldacar in person, since if they uncover the assassination plot, he will want to hear their story. The gamemaster can easily interweave the events of this adventure with other actions by the players at Buhr Widu. They are probably there with a specific purpose and will spend their days trying to obtain information or arranging meetings with Northman nobles.

Starting the Characters

When the adventure starts, the characters have been in Buhr Widu for at least a few days. The gamemaster tells them of the events outlined in the timeline, starting with the rumor of Arn's disappearance on the morning day 2. The characters may act on this information as they choose. (If they decide to look for the youngster on their own and Mahrbrand already has "identified" his target, they may well face the Easterlings already on Day 2.)

Aids

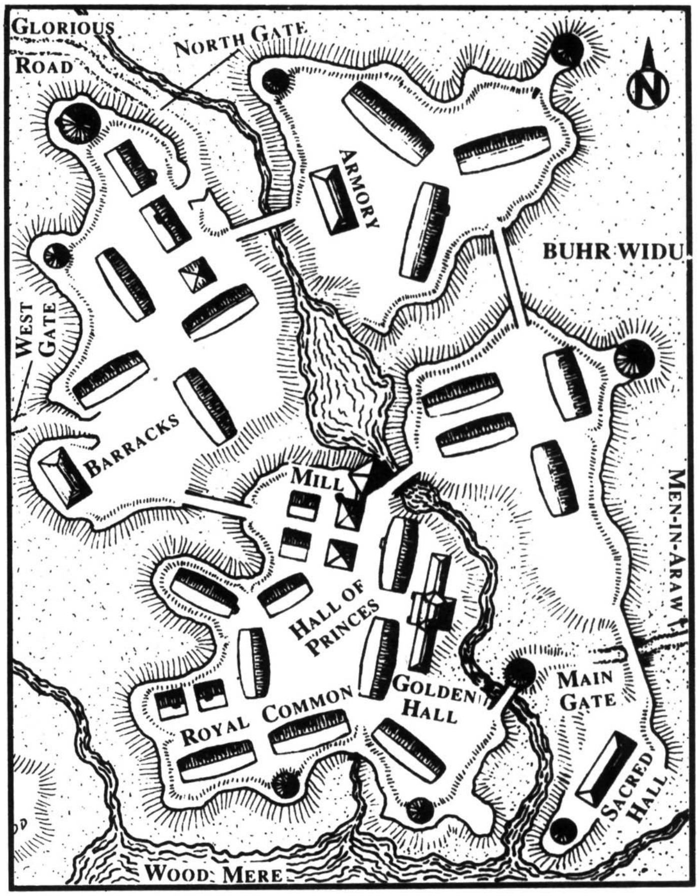
The characters must rely on their wits, their perception and their swords when facing these deadly foes. Perceptive characters may detect Mahrbrand shadowing them.

Obstacles

It is reasonably easy to cross the plains and reach Eldacar's base in Buhr Widu. However, a stranger passing through the settlements and towns along the prairie roads will be observed by their inhabitants. If the traveler is suspected of being in Castamir's pay, he may encounter some problems and, in extreme situations, he may even be accosted or killed.

The inhabitants are reluctant to reveal any information on Eldacar's whereabouts and activities. Most are ignorant, but even those that are not will most likely feign ignorance. The populace genuinely fears that Castamir will send a team of assassins to get rid of his annoying rival.

Buhr Widu



Hence, a traveler should know Eldacar's location before he begins his journey. Otherwise, he may spend quite a lot of time traveling up and down the Rhovanion Harroch in a vain search.

Outcomes

Characters who either kill or capture the Easterlings and Mahrbrand will each be gratefully rewarded by Arn's relatives with a good horse with saddle and bridle. Those who manage to squeeze at least parts of the truth out of Mahrbrand and inform Eldacar of the assassination plans against him will each be given a ring, by which token the exiled King promises a suitable reward when his throne is reclaimed (any character still alive in 1448 will receive a small manor in Anórien or Ithilien).

Should Wulfr aid them, he will not hesitate to accept pledges of future obligation from the characters, and may later involve the characters in one of his unpleasant schemes. Unscrupulous, he will slip away in the face of danger, and abandoned characters may have to pay a high price for becoming unwitting allies of the Necromancer.

9.3.5 ENCOUNTERS

Day 1

The Sagath approach the neighborhood of Buhr Widu and establish a hidden camp some miles away from it. They kidnap Arn, a young Éothraim boy hunting rabbits, and spend the night torturing him to get the information they want. However, Arn provides them with incorrect information, giving a faulty description of Eldacar. He dies before he reveals Eldacar's new identity. The warriors tie his body to a big stone and dump it in the Mere of Roots, but fail to tie the corpse properly.

Day 2

Arn's brothers Eirikr and Ormr, warriors living in Buhr Widu, go searching for him. Rumor of the disappearance spreads all over town before noon. Mahrbrand enters the town and incorrectly identifies one of the characters as Eldacar. The renegade then returns to the Easterlings and gives them a good description of the intended victim.

Day 3

Mahrbrand returns to Buhr Widu to monitor his victim's movements, marking any attempt to leave town. If this happens, he will quickly alert his companions.

Day 4

Soon after dawn, Arn's mutilated body is discovered floating in the Mere by one of his brothers. Everyone realizes that murderers are at large. Vidurafin orders a general search of the area surrounding the town. Every able-bodied man is expected to participate, and male characters who fail to participate will receive a polite request by a senior warrior to form a search team of their own and cover a certain area. Mahrbrand joins the general search, but soon disappears to warn the Easterlings.

Disguised as Éothraim, the assassins stalk their target, awaiting an opportune moment to strike. The trio will attack their intended victim from an ambush if possible. They are out to kill and to escape unhurt. They will fight competently and will probably not be deceived by any simple ruse. Mahrbrand will not participate in the attack, so that he may still be useful if the attempt fails.

Spotting Mahrbrand

Mahrbrand will monitor the characters from day 2 on. He will do his best to avoid discovery, though perceptive characters may succeed in detecting his activities. Mahrbrand will deny any ill intent if interrogated, claiming that he was fascinated by the presence of foreign lords.

Facing the Assassins

When out looking for Arn's murderers, the player characters will probably be ambushed by the Sagath warrior trio. The attack will be well prepared and deadly, preferably taking place in a secluded spot, such as a copse. The Easterlings desire to avoid attention from others. The gamemaster has to improvise a bit, basing his plans on the characters' behavior. Just remember that the Easterlings are very competent and that they will not stage a stupid ambush. This is a fight with little mercy and the characters must do their best to survive.

After the Fight

Should all three Easterlings be killed, characters may present their bodies before Vidurafin. The townsmen will rightly believe that the Easterlings were responsible for the murder, and will be grateful to the characters (although the presence of Sagath masquerading as Northmen will remain unexplained). Torturing Sagath prisoners will fail, unless magic is used to weaken their resistance.

Mahrbrand might talk if captured, but will lie in order to avoid implicating himself in the attempted murder. If the Easterlings obtain their prize, they will disappear as fast as possible with it (but will run into serious trouble when they present the wrong head to Castamir on behalf of the chieftain). If the intended victim escapes and the Easterlings manage to disentangle themselves from the fight, they will make another attempt if possible.

Wulfr's Interference

The Necromancer's agent may involve himself in these events for one or more of the following reasons: 1) the trapper may have some previous information concerning the Easterlings' plans (perhaps acquired through the Darkness-worshipping Sagath shamans); 2) Mahrbrand's activities in Buhr Widu may lead him to suspect his involvement in some plot; or 3) Wulfr may stumble upon the Sagath encampment by pure chance and monitor it in order to see what the warriors are up to. Wulfr desires to eliminate any threat against his charge, and may assist characters in overcoming their ambushers.

9.4 CALENARDHON DURING THE KIN-STRIFE

In Calenardhon, the sympathies of the people are very much with Eldacar; in fact many of the best men of the province have already joined him in Rhovanion. The heavily traveled road that leads through Calenardhon and Anórien to Minas Anor is now often traveled by Eldacar's supporters (who pose as merchants or traders). Messages are carried back and forth, and so is money, usually in the form of jewels. Men cross the river at Tir-Anduin, ostensibly as traders, and never come back.

9.4.1 THE MILITARY REORGANIZATION

To make sure there was no active resistance in Calenardhon, Castamir transferred all of its garrisons and their commanders to new posts in the South, or disarmed and imprisoned them in Osgiliath. He replaced them with his own men, soldiers and marines from Umbar and Pelargir, men who had fought at his side in the Kin-strife, and has quadrupled the size of the garrisons. After this had been done, Castamir declared Calenardhon a military territory, demoting it from provincial status and dividing it into three jurisdictions: Calmirië and the Eastfold he gave to his cousin Alandur; the East Emnet, Tir-Anduin, and the hill forts in the Emyn Muil were given to Sorondothor, a man of Umbar; and the fortress at Aglarond and the Westfold were given to Finlong, another of Castamir's favorites.

These New Lords brought a Southern richness and splendor into Calenardhon; they also brought an entirely new kind of government, one imposed by force and buttressed by laws and proclamations designed, above all, to coerce the people of the province. For the first time in its history, Calenardhon was governed—and governed harshly—by what amounted to a foreign power.

If Castamir had proved to be a wise and benevolent ruler, things probably would have turned out all right in the long run; but Castamir cared only for the Fleet, for voyaging, and for the great glory that new Southern conquests brought him. Partly to punish Calenardhon for siding against him in the Kin-strife and partly to enrich the Fleet, Castamir tripled the taxes and required massive restitution.

Just after assuming the throne, Castamir sent troops into Calenardhon, which had supported Eldacar by sending men, boats, and supplies to Osgiliath during the conflict the district. There was little resistance at first. Many of the most partisan Calenardhrons had already fled into Rhovanion to join Eldacar. Others—those who had not fought in the South—waited to see what the new King would do.

At first many hoped for the best. They believed that things would return to the previous status quo. The great lords of the South arranged matters to suit themselves; and in Calenardhon grain was growing, sheep were ready to be sheared, and the new King seemed far away.

CALMIRIË AND THE EASTFOLD

Alandur enlarged the fortress on the mountain flank above Calmirië, building himself a marble palace there. His personal guard of scimitar-carrying Southrons in turbans astounded the folk of Calmirië. A smiling, affable, and diplomatic man of high lineage, Alandur has quickly reordered the government of his domain. A capable administrator, he has done all he can to reconcile the people of the territory to the new state of affairs.

He has appointed two of his most trustworthy lieutenants to be the governors of the Eastfold and Onodrith; indolent by inclination, he leaves most of the unpleasant work of collecting the heavy new taxes to these men and to his seneschal, Henderch. Alandur himself spends a great deal of time hawking and hunting; these are the only activities that could even partially assuage his longing for the Sea. Twice a year he travels through the province, overseeing the administration of his lands and familiarizing himself with the people he rules.

Alandur and his lovely brunette wife Saranelda are famous for their sumptuous hospitality. Travelers of any degree are always welcome in his dining hall, and Alandur takes care to invite all of the most important men of the province to dine with him in his marble palace when their business brings them to Calmirië. In turn, he expects them to show him every courtesy whenever he passes through their district, no matter what the purpose of his visit might be, even if it is only for the pleasure he might gain by hunting and hawking in that part of his domain.

Taxes, Alandur declares, have been laid by the King for the good of the realm; it is the duty of all loyal men to pay them. However, if anyone comes to his palace complaining of real hardship, Alandur does what he can to mitigate the situation, sometimes even remitting part of the taxes due in the current year. In this way, Alandur has quickly gained the respect of many Calenardhrons.

The folk of Calmirië are overawed by the splendor of their new governor's manner; invitations to his entertainments and his hunting parties are eagerly courted. Alandur seems to take many people into his confidence. He lets on that King Castamir could certainly reduce the taxes to their former levels if the loyalty of Calenardhon were assured; alas, Alandur says he knows that there are many people with doubts about the new King, many who might still in their hearts be supporters of Eldacar.

It is not that he wishes to punish these men; on the contrary, he wants a chance to persuade them that support of Castamir would be to everybody's benefit. It is obvious, Alandur asserts, that anyone who helps him bring the territory into line will be rewarded. Before the first year had ended, Alandur had many "spies"; loyalty by coin if not by inspiration. Alandur seems to be able to make even the most resolute loosen their tongues in his presence. Alandur's mysterious ability to lead people into silence or confession may be attributed to the governor's erudite skill with potions and poisons of all sorts, a talent which he acquired during his voyages in the far South.

ONODRITH AND THE RIVER

Onodrith, which is part of Alandur's domain, is a considerable vexation to Henderch. There is significant sentiment against the new King in Onodrith and among the boatmen on the river, mostly because Castamir, to punish the boatmen for supplying Osgiliath during the war, sent a large detachment of troops up the right bank of the river with orders to destroy every boat they could find. More than half of the river boats were burned in this raid; many boatmen were killed.

To make matters worse, Castamir then instituted a new licensing tax on boats (one gold piece per year) and another tax on the lumber used to build them (five gold pieces for the requisite amount of larch wood). A customs house was erected about three miles above the fens, and the boatmen were required to pay not only a duty on the goods they carried but also a toll for their passage up or down the river.

Though Alandur does all he can to emphasize his sympathy for the boatmen by playing up his own enjoyment of boats and sailing, nothing can make the boatmen forget that Castamir ordered their boats burned. Their hearts are turned against the new King. Alandur appointed Telfar, his wife's nephew, as the governor of Onodrith. Telfar is neither cruel nor incapable, but because he is responsible for collecting all of the new taxes levied on the boatmen, he is despised, and several attempts have been made on his life.

AGLAROND, DUNLOSTIR, AND THE WESTFOLD

Castamir appointed Finlong, one of his court favorites, as the commander of the fortress of Aglarond and gave him the West Emnet and most of the Westfold as his own. A fearless sea-captain who has had absolutely no experience in government, Finlong has turned out to be a small-minded, contentious, and greedy governor. The rich farms of the Westfold were a potential source of great wealth (if the farmers had only been left to themselves) but Finlong sees spies plotting everywhere.

He frequently accuses rich farmers of conspiring to overthrow the King, which gives him an excuse to seize their property. He keeps prisoners accused of treason chained to the walls in the dungeons of Aglarond. It soon became apparent to the farmers of Dunlostir that possession of a profitable estate or a beautiful daughter could be a dangerous state of affairs in Finlong's domain.

Finlong is always embroiling himself in disputes over petty matters; these quarrels provide him an excuse for levying fines, and if the other party in the dispute objects to the size of the fines, Finlong accuses him of treason or disrespect to the King and claps him in irons. Travelers are also accused of these crimes if Finlong thinks they look wealthy. His principal amusement is to ride out through the Westfold with a large retinue of soldiers and beautiful women, hunting and hawking as he goes, and trampling everybody else's grain.

TIR-ANDUIN AND THE EAST EMNET

Castamir granted Tir-Anduin to Sorondothor. This domain includes all of the East Emnet; it is bounded on the west by the Anduin, on the east by the Onodló, on the south by the Fens, and on the north by Fangorn forest and the River Limlight. Because Castamir's control in Rhovanion is very much in doubt, Tir-Anduin is virtually a border march. Sorondothor was chosen to command this territory not only because he and his family contributed a great deal of money to Castamir's cause, but because Sorondothor had grown up defending the border marches to the South of Umbar.

An extremely able administrator, he is also a doughty warrior, and the kind of leader who can hearten his men in the thick of battle. Equally adept with his huge scimitar, his battle axe, or his mace, Sorondothor has great presence of mind; despite his fiery temper, he has never lost control of himself in battle or when making a business deal.

Sorondothor has made and lost several fortunes on trading voyages to Southern lands. He applied his understanding of trade to the bazaars at Tir Anduin, and by introducing a few simple reforms (he instituted a regular, reliable ferry capable of carrying large quantities or cargo; he paved a large market square and erected new docks on both sides of the river; and his soldiers patrol the east bank, making it much safer for honest merchants) he quadrupled the size of the trade in only a few years, lining his pockets along the way and contributing many thousands of gold pieces to the King's treasury. Although he knows very little about sheep and shepherds, Sorondothor encouraged the production of wool by digging wells in the East Emnet and the Wold and by doing all he could to make sure that the shepherds received a fair price for their fleece and raw wool. He has built new depots and a shipping dock about a mile below the town of Onodrith, and always sends an agent to the wool fair in Calmirië.

Sorondothor's border guards, every one of them a fearless warrior, wear a livery of red and silver. Most of them are from Umbar and Harondor. Their steel helmets carry a crest of red feathers. During the wintertime they all wear long red woolen cloaks and go about armed with scimitars and carrying shields. To discourage smuggling and to encourage payment of the King's Toll (one small silver piece per man entering Sorondothor's domain), the borders are patrolled by detachments of light cavalry.

Two mounted archers and three lancers make up the patrol. The Limlight and the Anduin are patrolled by small oared boats that are very fast and stable in the water; six rowers, three archers and a boatswain comprise the usual crew. The rowers are fully armed fighting men. Boat patrol is pleasant duty, and much sought after by the foot soldiers who man the border forts. Sorondothor's domain also includes a fort on the west bank of the Anduin above the rapids at Sarn Gebir. The fortresses of Amon Lhaw and Amon Hen on hills above the river where it passes into the steep channel leading to the falls of Rauros are manned by Castamir's men as the frontier of the home provinces.

ANGRENOST

Caranthir, commander of the garrison at Angrenost when the Kin-strife began, had been appointed to his position by Eldacar's father; as a result, his sympathies were entirely with Eldacar when the civil war broke out. The garrison at Orthanc was not large enough to allow Caranthir to send Eldacar significant aid during the siege of Osgiliath and, following the confederate victory, Angrenost was itself invested by the Usurper's forces under Alandur's command.

Caranthir was compelled to surrender the keys of Orthanc; for Castamir had been formally recognized by the Council of Gondor, to whose will Caranthir now submitted, despite his personal reservations. He and his garrison were spared, but were immediately reassigned to Anfalas, where Caranthir himself became the new governor. In Caranthir's place came Othir Darion, a Lamedon officer who had won renown during the fighting in Anfalas. With him came Edrahil, former palantír warden of Osgiliath and brother to Prince Adrazôr of Belfalas, who would thence become responsible for the new King's only remaining communication link with King Araphor in the north.

9.4.2 DEEPENING TROUBLES FOR CASTAMIR'S MEN

Opposition to Castamir in Calenardhon has assumed a definite form by 1441. Eldacar's supporters operate a secret network that passes money and messages through Calenardhon into Rhovanion. They now have real hope that they may soon be able to topple the Usurper's cruel regime: Eldacar, by all reports, is raising and training a vast army in Rhovanion.

In Calmiriё, which is the main waypoint for all travelers on the Great West Road (and whose many fairs provide a good excuse for traveling to the city) The Bull and Bear tavern is run by Eldacar's supporters. The landlord, Vardamavi, will help anyone who gives the right password, which is in the form of a verse, one half of each line being repeated by each person:

A storm cloud *hangs over the sea*
The grain *in the fields has been sown*
White eagles *return to the tree*
And the people *return to their own*

Alandur, of course, knows about this verse and, because of his many spies, is now in a solid position to take advantage of his network of informers. Many travelers, as is the custom, are invited to his table. None are detained, and all depart unharmed. Many of Eldacar's supporters later boast to their traveling companions that the new Lord of Calmiriё seems to be a gullible, affable simpleton who will believe anything. They leave so many messages with Vardamavi that he often forgets who left which message and to whom the message ought to be delivered.

Vardamavi's daughter, Astrith, a beautiful dark sad-eyed lady, is openly scornful of Vardamavi's attempts to help Eldacar's supporters. Her father's rebellious activities, she thinks, do no one any good and will only get them both into trouble. "Give me the strong arms of a sailor" she says, cozying up to Henderch whenever he is visiting Calmiriё. Astrith is in fact a ranger, having inherited her talents from her mother, a dark-eyed beauty from Dunlostir who died when Astrith was ten years old. Not long ago, after the Wool Fair, Vardamavi went up to visit Alandur with other inn keepers to arrange for the Horse Fair prizes.

Henderch continues visiting The Bull and Bear even though he knows Vardamavi is plotting against Lord Alandur; it adds spice to his relationship with Astrith, who has told him many times that she thinks her father a fool. Henderch, who can drink huge quantities of ale without losing his head, does not for a moment believe that a rabble of farmers and shepherds and drovers will ever stand up to Governor Alandur (who knows the name of every plotter). Henderch believes that a little bit of revolution in the province might make his own job easier: he may be able to get rid of a few of the worst troublemakers, and if only the phlegmatic farmers of Dunlostir would do him a favor and smother Finlong underneath a pile of oats in one of their granaries, Alandur might enlarge his own domain, and Henderch might receive command of Dunlostir. And as for Eldacar, let him be King of Rhovanion, Henderch thinks, if he must be King of something.

Lately though, even the doughty Henderch has been worrying about the situation. A new leader has arisen in Calenardhon: the Green Asp. Two of Alandur's "informants" have been killed by short green poisoned arrows, and Alandur, despite information from his other spies, that which he has gained from travelers who have met with the new leader, has not yet been able to learn the identity of the Asp. It is no laughing matter. Three soldiers were killed at the gates of the city in the last day of the Wool Fair, and no sooner had their murders been discovered than every fountain on the avenue of fountains began to spurt green foam. This, combined with the death of his soldiers, has sorely tried Alandur's patience.

But no one seems to know who the Green Asp might be. Sometimes it seems the Asp might be more than one person; a cavalry patrol was ambushed on the Great Road near the River Snowbourne the morning after the attack on the guard at the gates of the town. The lone survivor reported that a swarm of ground bees—or maybe several swarms of them—had thrown their horses into a panic, unseating all of his companions. Then his own horse bolted, carrying him a long way out into the meadowlands. After rounding up the horses, he returned and found all of his companions dead. They had all been killed by short green poisoned arrows, not by the minor wounds.

As if this ugly business with the Green Asp were not enough, the boatmen have been acting up again; the King's customs house has been burned, and Castamir wants to know why the culprits have not yet been caught and punished.

In Tir-Anduin, Sorondothor has been fighting a border war. Lately he has beefed up his patrols to double their previous strength; there are now ten men in a cavalry patrol. He does not have enough men to make a large sortie across the river to wipe out the rebels in their camps, so he has contented himself with making raids. He leads many of these in person at the head of his Kirinsiredain. Boat patrol is no longer a safe and pleasant duty, but the escalated activity along the border suits Sorondothor's men very well; they love fighting.

Trade in the bazaars has fallen off slightly because the approaches to Tir Anduin on both sides of the river are more than slightly hazardous for noncombatants. Sorondothor, who can squeeze a profit out of any situation, has lately taken to requiring a deposit of three gold pieces from anybody who wants to cross the river into Rhovanion. Honest merchants, of course, can redeem their deposits at the end of the day; persons going off to join Eldacar, however, will enrich Sorondothor's treasury.

Overall, Sorondothor has been impressed by the ability of the soldiers raiding his territory. They fight well and they don't mistreat their prisoners. They are well armed, they retreat in good order, and they give no quarter to their foes. They have been much more trouble to him than their scanty numbers might indicate, and their guerrilla activities have been costing him money by scaring off traders.

One thing has been puzzling Sorondothor of late: his soldiers report that there seem to be a surprising number of "madmen" coming up out of Calenardhon to trade in the bazaars. These madmen suddenly go off the deep end; one of them, for example, attacked a cart full of wool, plunging his sword into it again and again until he fell down, exhausted. After coming to himself in Sorondothor's prison, this man claimed he had been fighting a mûmak; incriminating documents found on his person after a careful search, however, revealed that he was one of Eldacar's agents.

In the Westfold, several of Finlong's tax collectors have been murdered; evidently to emphasize the point, the bodies, drawn and quartered by teams of oxen—were left on the Great West Road. Finlong's response, of course, has been to throw even more people into his dungeons. By 1441, more than a hundred of the region's most prosperous farmers are imprisoned in the dungeons at Aglarond, and the people of that district are very much of a mind to get them out. As yet, however, no one has figured out a good plan for setting them free.

9.4.3 ADVENTURES IN CALENARDHON

Adventures set in Calenardhon during the Kin-strife will generally fall into one of two categories: either the adventurers will be traveling through join Eldacar or to link up with his supporters in the Calenardhon itself or in the southern provinces; or they will be part of the resistance to Castamir's new men—Alandur, Finlong, and Sorondothor. In either case, the identity of the Green Asp is of paramount importance because this leader is the chief figure in the resistance movement. The Green Asp, that mysterious person who is so troublesome to Alandur and Henderch, is none other than the lovely Astrith, Vardamavi's daughter. No one in the territory, not even her father, knows the secret of her identity.

Alandur, the affable poisoner, is obviously an extremely dangerous foe and should be avoided whenever possible; the nature of his slow-acting poisons, however, should be concealed from the player characters for as long as seems practical. Parties of adventurers sent from Eldacar may link up with Eldacar's supporters in the grasslands and in Calmirië; the boatmen are a natural source of aid to Castamir's enemies.

Adventuring near Tir-Anduin and in the East Emnet is a straightforward exercise in guerrilla warfare; Sorondothor and his worthy opponents and can sometimes be bribed to surrender their prisoners. Sorondothor does not believe in putting prisoners to death, and he would just as soon make a profit on the situation by exchanging them for fifty to sixty gold pieces or one of his own Kirinsiredain.

Adventures in the Westfold revolve around freeing the prisoners at Aglarond; in the interim, the people of Dunlostir are doing all they can create trouble for Finlong and his agents.

10.0 GAMEMASTER ADVICE

This section contains a mixture of rules, adventure ideas, and "how to" advice for gamemasters. It should be read accordingly. Use some or all of the suggestions for expanding the scope of your adventure or campaign.

10.1 RUNNING A CITY-BASED CAMPAIGN

Compared to a conventional dungeon or wilderness setting, the city is characterized by great dynamism. Many events take place simultaneously. This puts great demands on a gamemaster's descriptive powers, memory, and ability to coordinate the different facets of an adventure. Players are sometimes bewildered by the multiplicity of choices. They can easily loose track of essentials. On the other hand, urban locales offer unparalleled opportunities for character interaction. A place like Osgiliath or Pelargir accommodates adventures which would prove impossible elsewhere.

City-based adventures generally have non-linear structures. The characters often have several different goals to pursue simultaneously, and they must commonly split into several smaller groups for their investigations. Of course, group cohesion may not be especially necessary given the relative dearth of combat. The level of violence is usually low in a city adventure, for the authorities are strictly opposed to combat inside the walls. Weapons and armor often invite concern or suspicion. Innkeepers and shop-owners generally disapprove of customers wearing chainmail and carrying swords and axes.

All of Gondor's cities post regulations prohibiting unauthorized public displays of military equipment. A person walking the streets of Minas Anor with a broadsword and chainmail faces possible arrest and a hefty fine. (It is strictly forbidden to carry any weapon, even the smallest dagger, in the upper levels of the city.) Martial accouterments are likely to be impounded. Hence, both the characters and their opponents are limited to carrying inconspicuous weapons such as daggers, slings, and quarterstaffs. In order to avoid liability, any armor should be worn under the clothes. Soft leather or extremely light mail might prove to be the only sensible options.

10.1.1 THE GONDORIAN CITY

While relatively comfortable and safe, the average Gondorian city is by no means a technological mecca. It remains a difficult place to live, work, or explore, especially at night.

ILLUMINATION

In the absence of street lighting, darkness is a major problem in a city. When the sun sets, the city becomes very dark. During the early hours of the evening, there is some light seeping out through windows, but not enough to give any significant street illumination. Most people go to bed a couple of hours after sunset and rise at dawn. During that time, the streets are pitch dark. Nocturnal folk must rely on lanterns or torches.

Most Gondorian cities are designed according to a simple, practical, and logical scheme. It is hard to get lost, for the street plans are carefully regulated to prohibit slum mazes (this is especially true of Minas Anor). Streets are patrolled by city guards, whose most important task is to look out for fires. While they also happen upon criminals, the transgressors are usually too skilled to be spotted by lantern-carrying watchmen.

ODORS

The architects that built Gondor's cities during the early Third Age were very skilled in sewer design, but even these are unable to eliminate the stench of rotting garbage. The townsmen have adjusted to this fact, but visitors from the countryside, where the air is better, may find urban odors harsh during the first days. None of the South Kingdom's cities enjoy the luxury of a pleasant, rural bouquet.

COMMUNICATION

While wilderness adventures typically involve lengthy travel, the cities of Gondor are small enough to be traversed in less than an hour. All important persons have access to swift messengers to ensure that information easily reaches its destination within a city's walls. If something important has happened, rumor spreads fast enough to reach the ears of all (in a more or less distorted form) within a few hours. Players should consider their actions with care, lest their reputations be spoiled by such rumor networks.

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

The Gondorian legal system can seriously influence any adventure, especially if it occurs in a city or town, where characters can be closely supervised by town guards, the garrison, and the Côr Aran. Of course, the legal system in a society like Gondor is built on local traditions, and the laws differ in different parts of the country. The kingdom contains a bewildering variety of solutions to the problem of administering justice. Regardless of locale, though, the foundation of Gondor's legal system is simple: the laws should reflect as closely as possible the Will of the Valar.

In general, there are two different methods to determine the law in a particular case: common law and codified law. Common law is not written down in a book. Instead, a judge determines it by looking to earlier cases, called precedents. Where precedents do not exist, the judge analyzes similar cases to find a proper solution.

Codified law, on the other hand, exists as a collection of written laws. Here the judge has to interpret the meaning of the text and its significance to the case. Older cases are only used as a guide for interpreting the text.

Usually, juries resolve the material "facts" of a case. They determine the circumstances and decide exactly what happened. Meanwhile, the judge (or judges) decide(s) the legal facts, that is the nature and origin or fault, etc. Some courts, though, combine the two analyses by employing lay judges. They work together with the legal judge to decide both material and legal facts.

A court of appeals must apply the same law as the lower court. If the lower court used a jury, the appeals court can only consider legal facts. If the lower court employed lay judges, the higher court can also try material facts.

URBAN ADMINISTRATION

The councils and royal officers ruling Gondor's cities wield substantial power. They regulate all matters concerning the well-being of the city and its inhabitants. Fire, disease, and bread riots must be prevented, regardless of the rights and privileges of the individual citizen. Those who break the regulations are brought to court and fined.

The following suggestions are offered as aspects of daily life typically subject to such regulation. The exact details of implementation vary from city to city as determined by the gamemaster.

Buildings: Building projects must be approved by the planning office before construction begins, in order to ensure that it meets with local standards of durability, fire prevention, and sanitation. Inspectors often visit a building under construction a few times to check whether the work is properly executed. They have the right to stop the work if deviations from the approved plans are discovered. One must typically be a registered tax-payer for some years before the privilege of owning a house is granted.

Fire Prevention: As no effective means of fire-fighting exists in any city, regulations put heavy emphasis on preventive measures. Arson is usually punished by death, even if the fire caused no death; the law justly considers fire as one the most dangerous hazards of city life. Forges, ovens, stoves, and open fires must have adequate fire prevention equipment within easy reach (i.e., a bucket of water and brushes). Smithies must be located in stone buildings.

Safety: Civilians are forbidden to carry military arms in public. Such regulations are strictly enforced during the Usurper's reign, and blatant disregard may be construed as "preparation for armed insurrection." This is a crime punished by death.

Sanitation: Such regulations intend to decrease the risk of disease and to lessen the bad odors permeating the Gondorian city. Hence, it is strictly forbidden to throw garbage into the streets; it must be deposited at assigned spots. All buildings must also be equipped with adequately designed privies inside or in the backyard.

Taxation: Most cities finance their administration through the taxation of property-owners (which may be of little consequence for wandering characters).

Trade and Labor: City authorities regulate merchants, guilds, and artisans to prevent unfair trade practices. Cartels and monopolies are generally forbidden, and guilds are usually forbidden to bar a qualified artisan from joining. Certain professions are accompanied by a licensing procedure which establishes competence. Contracts must be properly registered in official archives in order to possess validity. Interest rates on loans may not exceed a certain level. Certain essential commodities, such as bread, have a decreed maximum price.

Traffic: Narrow city streets which become easily congested necessitate traffic regulations. Wagons and carts may be prohibited during certain hours. Other regulations are more concerned with road safety. For instance, the citizens of Lond Ernil are allowed to hang clothing in the streets, but not so low that a man on horseback might hit his head.

TYPICAL INN PRICES

Vegetable soup	4 tp
Lamb stew	6 tp
Chicken pie	6 tp
Onion Pie	5 tp
Fresh fruit (varies with season)	2-4 tp
Cheese (various kinds)	2 tp each
Small loaf of bread	2 tp
Large loaf of bread	3 tp
Wine (pint) red or white	6 tp
Wine (half-pint) red or white	3 tp
Brandy (half-pint)	10 tp
Ordinary beer (pint)	2 tp
Bitter (dark beer) (pint)	3 tp
Cider (pint)	1 tp
Sleeping accommodation	2 cp
Stabling and fodder	2 tp

10.1.2 PLAYER CHARACTERS IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Information

Cities abound with people who possess valuable information, whether of current or historical interest. Current information can be anything from the latest news of the royal court to the going price of wool in the marketplace, while historical information deals with facts no longer of immediate importance to people, like the wool prices two years ago or a royal scandal several generations ago. Competent adventurers must keep track of both current and historical information. They must therefore have access to knowledgeable informants. Hence, players should not deign to devote a good portion of their game time to seeking out reliable sources of information. A character skilled in bribing, persuasion, shadowing, burglary, or library use will quickly discover that it can be equally or even more rewarding than skill with a blade.

A Safe Base

Characters operating in a city need a permanent base. Inns are usually open to all, making it hard to guarantee privacy. Sooner or later the characters are bound to attract unwanted attention, which may create security problems for those who choose to stay at an inn. (The Côr Aran keep a watch on inns with some regularity.)

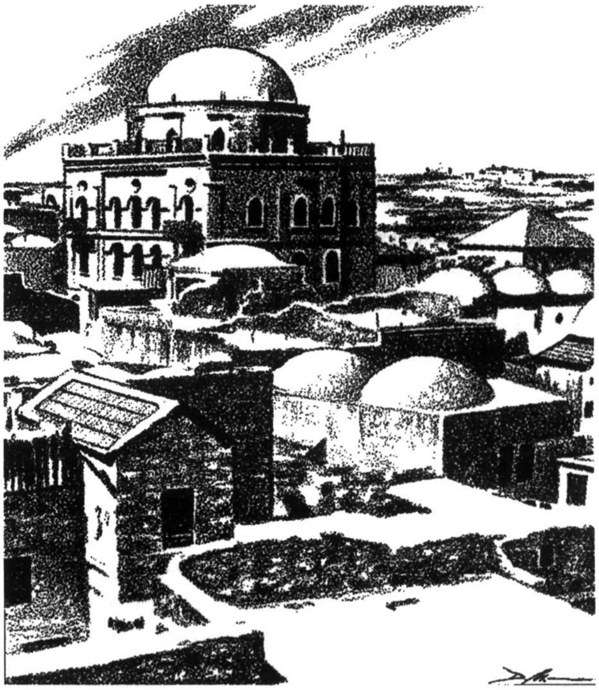
Characters intending to stay in a city for a long time should rent a house or an apartment where they can store their belongings with reasonable safety, and discuss their plans in secrecy. A stone house is safer than one built of wood, since stone does not burn. Buying a house could prove difficult, since many cities have strict regulations defining who is allowed to own property. In such places, outsiders are rarely allowed to purchase buildings or land.

Characters sponsored by a wealthy and powerful lord may have access to their patron's premises; though in the turbulent times of Castamir's reign, such an individual can often lose his fortune or be accused of crimes against the king, which may land the characters in deep trouble. A prepared escape route can save lives when disaster strikes.

Characters of noble birth may take advantage of the law of hospitality to get themselves and their "servants" (i.e., other player characters) invited as guests at the home of a relative or acquaintance, though such an arrangement may have some serious drawbacks. Privacy, for example, is hard to maintain, and there is always a risk that household servants will spot something suspicious and report it to their master or to the Côr Aran.

A Suitable Goal

Players usually like to have a long-term goal for their characters. In a city-based campaign, there can rarely be a geographic goal, since it seldom is difficult to reach a specific location. Instead, a goal should be more abstract, for instance bringing about the return of the true king, or to clear a noble's name of false allegations. Such non-material goals can be very hard to achieve and should give the players plenty of challenges and ample excitement.



Evading the Côr Aran

Characters who have been brought to the attention of the Côr Aran (for whatever reason) will soon discover that the Crows have them on file. Personal information files are kept in the archive at Pelargir (see Section 2.2.7) and may be obtained on request by any interested local figure among the Côr Aran. The only factor which may turn to the advantage of suspected characters is the lack of reliable visual description in such files. Files typically include a written description of their subjects (when this is available), and may even contain a sketch of the individual in question; but such information may easily be countered by altering one's physical appearance (e.g., changes in hair color or style, changes in attire and demeanor, etc.).

Communication Problems

Servants of the Enemy are constrained to act with little guidance from their masters, once inside the boundaries of the South-kingdom. Because it is a two week ride from either Lugarlûr or Dol Guldur to Gondorian territory, it is difficult for Sauron and Adûnaphel to send messengers to their spies without being detected. It is sometimes possible to use birds—preferably crows, since pigeons fear to approach Evil strongholds—and bats as message carriers. Animals, however, are unable to bear lengthy messages, and regular use would attract undue attention. Communication by way of dreams and visions also has drawbacks, since such activities might be sensed by Amroth in Lórien or Elrond in Rivendell.

10.2 SERVING THE CROWN

This section outlines some possibilities for introducing political careers into the course of a campaign, which may give players a novel experience by allowing their characters to assume more or less significant roles in an administrative or political organization. There are many organizations controlled by the king, a provincial lord, or city council, which are essential for Gondor's existence (or at least that is what their personnel claim).

10.2.1 POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Control over the surplus of agricultural land is the foundation of political power in Gondor. The primary function of military might is to protect and enforce privileged access to land for the benefit of those in power. Four distinct systems of land tenure have been operative in the history of the South-kingdom, each of which is present in the organization of the realm during the Usurper's reign: (1) provincial administration, (2) military allotment, (3) estate grants, and (4) royal possession. The former two are dominated by a patrimonial principle, while the latter invoke feudal arrangements.

Patrimonial rule means that ownership of land is claimed as the hereditary possession of a single ruling house. Patrimonialism extends the principle of patriarchal authority over other households and lands not originally connected by blood to the ruling family. By its very nature, patrimonial rule is arbitrary and centralized (though typically limited by the constraints of traditional law). A patrimonial ruler appoints officers to administer his or her domain, who collect tribute and exercise judicial or military powers on behalf of their ruler, but do not own the land they govern.

Feudal rule means that certain patrimonial claims to land are abandoned by the ruler. Land is granted or recognized as the hereditary possession (or estate) of another household. This feudal relationship cannot subsequently be bound or loosed by the arbitrary will of the ruler; instead, the arrangement holds legal authority above that of the ruler. Feudal land is, therefore, theoretically inalienable, and represents a decentralization of royal power. A final characteristic which distinguishes the feudal relationship from patrimonial rule is that the former must be entered into voluntarily by both parties, who are thereby bound to fulfill its mutual obligations, whereas the latter is subject to normative royal decree.

Feudalism and patrimonialism are conflicting political principles; rarely do they appear in pure form, given the vicissitudes of power and the accidents of history. External forces which influence the particular admixture of feudal and patrimonial arrangements in a given context include the relative predominance of trade, the size and geopolitical situation of a realm, and the distribution of military responsibility. The two most crucial internal factors governing their relationship are the degree of legal constraint on a ruler's actions and the relative power of that ruler with respect to the rest of the ruling elite.

The realm of Gondor is claimed as the patrimony of the heirs of Anárion, who rule the Dúnedain of the South-kingdom in accordance with the laws of Númenor and the necessities imposed by the lands of exile. But the history of Dúnadan control over Middle-earth extends more than a thousand years before Elendil and his sons set foot on the shores of the Great Lands, and the fact of this Númenórean presence has exercised a profound effect upon the later political shape Gondor was to assume.

The isle of Númenor was given as a gift to the three tribes of the Edain by the Valar, who appointed their patriarch Elros and his heirs to be their priest-kings. The division of land was based upon previously existing tribal arrangements, and was considered inalienable. The King functioned less as an absolute ruler than as a mediator of divine law and traditional Adan norms. The traditions of (uncorrupted) Númenor as preserved by the Faithful in Gondor therefore involved significant limitations on the arbitrary power of their rulers. The later formation of coastal dominions in Middle-earth as a source of tribute represents a clear turn towards patrimonial claims over non-Adan land, but this tendency was renounced by the Faithful (though the continued animosity of pre-Númenórean inhabitants towards the exiles testifies that even the Faithful did not wholly escape this temptation, whether out of choice or perceived necessity).

Those of the Faithful who settled what was later to become Gondor continued to order their lives on the basis of traditional patriarchal arrangements, ruled (or, better, influenced) by notables of revered lineage. With the coming of Isildur and Anárion, these prominent leaders took Elendil for their lord, investing him and his heirs with the sacral powers of the line of Elros. Isildur and Anárion chose to establish themselves with the exiles along the Anduin above Pelargir, so as to avoid infringing on the traditional land arrangements of those Faithful already dwelling in Gondor; and in the case of Belfalas, Elendil saw fit to retain and formalize these arrangements with a grant of feudal autonomy to the line of Edhelion, because of its own sacral connection to the traditions of Númenor (see Section 5.4.1).

The settlement of the exiles in Anórien and Ithilien led to the eventual development of these lands into royal demesnes—lands claimed as the personal possession of the ruling house, but replicating the sacral obligations of the King toward the houses of the Edain in Númenor. This arrangement acquired a semi-feudal character as new houses emerged; but it initially lacked the voluntary character of a genuinely feudal contract, since it was grounded in normative prescriptions of the Númenórean law concerning the allotment of inalienable land to the houses of the Edain.

With the rise of the Ship-kings (see Section 2.1.1), Gondor saw the development of a renewed patrimonial tendency, driven by the needs of war and the expansion of the realm into new territory. Anfalas, Lamedon, Morthond, Harondor and, finally, Umbar were brought under direct

military control by the Kings. This necessitated a professional standing army, for which the traditional muster proved inadequate. Repulsion of the Easterling invasions under Turambar, and later Minalcar, led to the over-extension of Dúnadan dominion, necessitating alliance, patronage, and finally recognition of client-kingship over the Northmen of Rhovanion. Land taken by conquest (with or without resistance) was now claimed as the patrimony of the Kings, to do with as they pleased.

The maintenance of Gondorian imperium on a more permanent basis necessitated arbitrary land allotment to retired soldiers in an effort (1) to compensate these troops for their non-traditional military service, and (2) to settle the conquered territories with loyal subjects. A given territory thus secured would then be transformed into a provincial jurisdiction, administered by royal officers responsible for collecting annual taxes. This was the fate of both Harondor and Lamedon, but not of Anfalas or Umbar. In the case of Anfalas, this was due to the sparse settlement and limited productivity of the land; in the case of Umbar and its territory, this was due to the need of the Southron lords for a strong military patron to secure their tenuous rule over their own people (to say nothing of Dúnadan fears of invasion). The Morthond-vale, having been successfully secured by the Prince of Belfalas, was granted as a separate fief to one of his sons.

10.2.2 POLITICAL CAREERS

Serving as a Condir, Herdir, or Othir

The King appoints noblemen to the posts of Condir, Herdir, or Othir for a fixed term (usually one to three years). The appointee receives a yearly stipend in coinage for his service to the realm. Such tasks are very well suited for a group of player characters. Their leader is appointed to the position and the rest are his advisers, bodyguards, servants, and assistants. For instance, the leading character might be appointed as the Condir of a mining town in a remote mountain area, Othir of a small fortress on the Harnen river (occasionally harassed by Adûnaphel's servants), or Herdir in a spice growing rural district of southern Ithilien (a strategic area perhaps infiltrated by loyalists or spies of the Enemy).

Entering a City Administration

Should characters wish to serve in one of Gondor's chief cities, the gamemaster must offer administrative careers that provide excitement, danger, and responsibility (role-playing the activities at the Bureau of Streets and Sewers is not particularly fun). For instance, the characters may form a intelligence group whose task is to investigate the activities of clandestine organizations and perform operations to ensure the safety of the city and its leaders. The interests of the city leadership are not necessarily identical with those of Eldacar or Castamir; hence they must operate carefully to avoid acquiring powerful enemies in the royal court.

Flying with the Crows

Player characters might form a Côr Aran cell assigned to a variety of tasks appropriate to its members' skills (NPCs can fill occasional gaps). This career is probably most suitable for players with somewhat nasty inclinations, since the Crows are known for their lack of civility and respect for traditional values. Characters may also be loyalists bent on infiltrating the Crows, but this is a very difficult and very dangerous job. Traitors within the Côr Aran are never brought to justice; they simply disappear, and nobody seems to know what grisly fate they met at the hands of the Usurper's most skilled torturers.

10.2.3 CAREER ADVANCEMENT

A person pursuing a political career will get involved in the schemes and plots of the Kin-strife regardless of their position. There will be loyalist groups opposing government activities, undercover Crow cells monitoring characters' performance and loyalties, servants of the Enemy spreading confusion and lies and, in some places, native groups wanting to get rid of Gondor's influence in local affairs. Criminals and merchants ply their business as usual, and none of these like scrutiny; but they are not above using the authorities to get rid of unwanted competition (for instance, by false denunciations). Hence, characters must tread carefully to avoid becoming somebody else's pawn in the political game.

Player characters should be placed in a situation which combines accountability to superiors with freedom of action. They should be assigned to broadly defined tasks where they have to decide themselves how to get the job done. Their choices will affect the outcome and they will have to face its consequences, be these good or bad. Characters operating in this way will find both challenge and suspense.

Success will be noted by superiors, and competent characters will be rewarded and assigned to greater tasks. But success inevitably breeds rivals, and opponents may secretly work against characters by rumor-mongering and sabotage. Irregularities may be noted by the Côr Aran, and when its files contain enough incriminating evidence, the Crows will move against the implicated characters.

Should their enemies become too threatening, flight may be the only way to survive. The characters can perhaps escape to Buhr Widu with enough quality intelligence to be accepted by Eldacar. Otherwise, they may look for neutral sites of exile, such as Arthedain or Harad. If they choose to serve the Enemy, they can head for Lugarlûr.

10.3 CONVEYING FEAR

The dramatic elements of fear should be exploited in gaming. There are many ways of making the players feel terrified when their characters try to unmask the evil conspiracies that threaten the Free Peoples. This section outlines some basic gamemaster tools, which can be utilized and combined in many ways to conjure the proper mood for a frightening adventure.

10.3.1 THE ROLE OF THE SENSES

Human beings are daylight creatures, and night and darkness signal danger. Their eyes do not work well in darkness, reproducing only rudimentary pictures of their surroundings. The mind combines these incomplete perceptions, adding distortions from the imagination and memories. The second most important sense, hearing, is similarly handicapped—the winds whining through trees or sudden thunder hides and distorts other sounds, again giving the mind a false impression of its perceptions.

The next sense to consider is smell. It is of minor importance, but when sight and hearing are impaired by unfavorable circumstances, it can be vital. The most important facet of smell is to discern between what is pleasant and what is not. Stenches and odors always add unpleasantness to a situation, regardless of other circumstances. A beautiful summer field loses most of its charm when the air is permeated by the stench of rotting corpses from a recent battle.

The senses of touch and taste are usually of less importance, when you wish to convey fear. However, they can occasionally be suitable. In pitch darkness, the hands may substitute for the eyes, suddenly touching slimy tentacles or cold corpses. The tongue is sensitive to the acrid taste of fear, appearing when our body involuntarily reacts to horrors. It is also sensitive to strange flavors, maybe indicating that the character has been affected by an unknown poison.

THE LUNAR CYCLE

Man's eyes may be assisted during nighttime by the pale light of the moon. It is an unreliable celestial body, though, for it rises and sets at widely different hours. The knowledge of its monthly cycle may save an adventurer from a gruesome fate. The full lunar cycle lasts 29.6 days. For game purposes, this has been simplified to 30 days. The gamemaster arbitrarily assigns one day as Day 1 of the cycle (e.g., the first day of T.A. 1441) and counts forward from this date for the whole campaign.

Day	Rise	Set	Light	Phase
1	05:45	18:09	0%	New
2	06:34	18:58	1%	
3	07:22	19:47	4%	
4	08:11	20:35	9%	
5	09:00	21:24	16%	
6	09:48	22:13	25%	
7	10:37	23:01	35%	
8	11:26	23:50	45%	Half
9	12:14	00:39	56%	
10	13:03	01:27	66%	
11	13:51	02:16	76%	
12	14:40	03:04	84%	
13	15:29	03:53	91%	
14	16:17	04:42	96%	
15	17:06	05:30	99%	
16	17:55	06:19	100%	Full
17	18:43	07:08	98%	
18	19:32	07:56	95%	
19	20:21	08:45	89%	
20	21:09	09:34	82%	
21	21:58	10:22	73%	
22	22:47	11:11	63%	
23	23:35	12:00	53%	Half
24	00:24	12:48	42%	
25	01:13	13:37	32%	
26	02:01	14:26	22%	
27	02:50	15:14	14%	
28	03:39	16:03	8%	
29	04:27	16:51	3%	
30	05:16	17:40	1%	

10.3.2 EVOKING MOODS

To convey a frightening mood to players, what they see and hear should be described in such a manner that they feel that they do not perceive or realize the whole picture, but that there are many things that are unknown to them. Evasive replies (e.g., "as far as you know" or "according to your eyes") communicate nervousness about things hidden from them. Since detailed descriptions of frightening phenomena lessens their effect, is far better to let the players use their imagination of whatever horrors they are to encounter than to describe them in gruesome detail. The unknown is always far more terrifying than the known.

Role players know that bad weather (such as rain and thunder) amplifies the effects of darkness; terrible things should therefore happen at night and in bad weather. Night is the realm of Sauron's minions, since they often have their senses adjusted to the absence of light, whereas human beings are at their best during daylight.

10.4 CRYPTOLOGY

This section gives a brief introduction to cryptology and its importance in times of war. All participants in the Kin-strife consider it essential to deny outsiders access to vital information. Hence, codes and ciphers are extensively used to protect written knowledge. You may wish to introduce the secondary skill of "cryptology" in order to distinguish the cryptologist as a principal specialist during the Gondorian struggle.

10.4.1 CIPHERS

The content of a text may be concealed by rearranging or substituting characters according to pre-defined mathematical rules. The simplest kind of cipher merely switches the sound value of the letters, for instance by writing B instead of A, C instead of B, and so on. More sophisticated ciphers are often based on complex mathematical calculations. A skilled cryptologist can usually crack an easy cipher in a few hours, provided the language in which it is written is known. A complicated one may take much longer to solve, ranging from days to months.

10.4.2 CODES

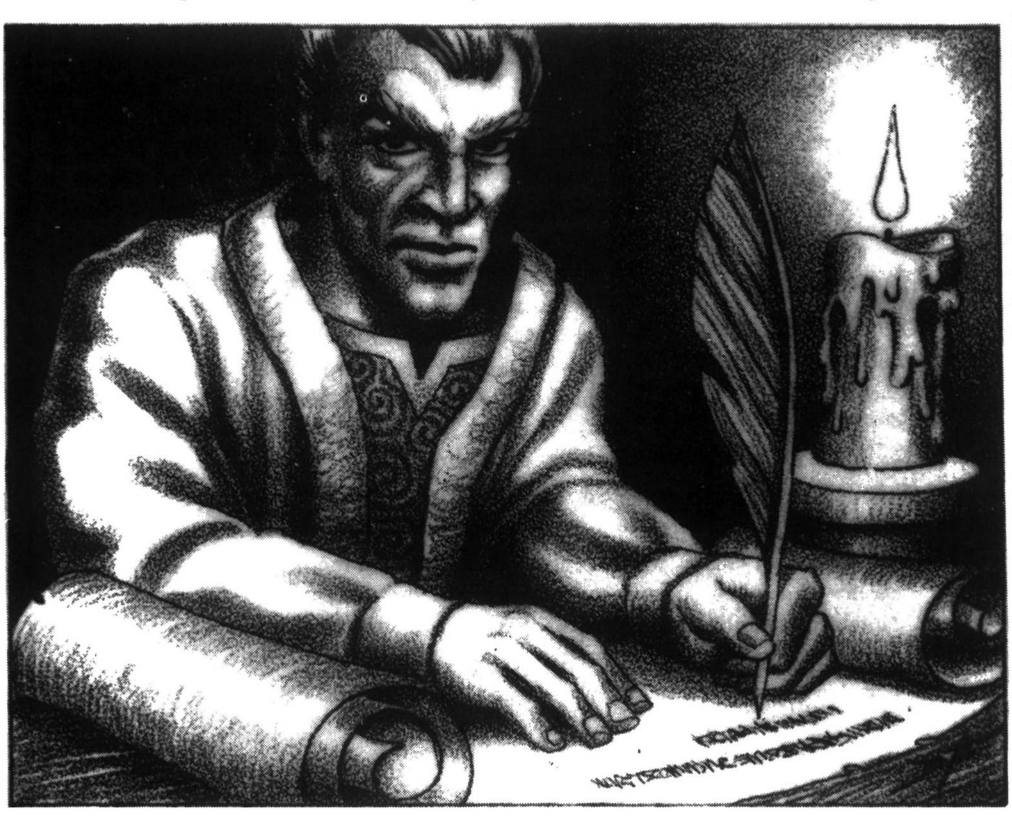
All codes require a code book, a kind of dictionary that gives substitutions for ordinary words. For instance, the word ARMY may be substituted by the code word FAMILY, or by a random combination of letters or digits. With the first kind of code, it is possible to hide a message in a text that looks innocent. It could be hard to realize that a letter detailing various family matters, really deals with the problems of Castamir's army.

The second kind of code is quite obvious when one sees the text, since it only consists of numbers or seemingly meaningless letter combinations, but it is harder to crack, since the message does not reveal anything of its contents; it is difficult to analyze a text consisting only of twenty five-digit numbers, since one does not have the slightest clue about its subject.

To use a code, both the sender and receiver of the information must have access to identical code books. Such books are usually easily identified when discovered and are hard to explain away. Codes are far more difficult to crack than ciphers, since a code is not based on mathematical rules. When one has cracked a cipher, all messages written with it immediately reveal their information to the cryptologist. A code is cracked gradually, when the cryptologist uncovers the true meaning of one coded word after another. It is possible to understand segments of a coded message, while other parts of it resist interpretation.

10.4.3 EXOTIC LANGUAGES

Foreign or obscure languages may prove useful for withholding information, though such a method is not foolproof, since one may unexpectedly encounter someone who knows that language. The common languages spoken in Gondor are Adûnaic, Westron, and Sindarin, but many also possess some knowledge of Quenya, Silvan, the various Northman tongues, the languages of the Easterling tribes, Haradaic, and the many Daen dialects. Hence, languages from more distant lands are safer to use. The Necromancer's agents do not use the Black Speech, since it is so readily recognized for what it is due to it evil "sound." The universally secretive Dwarves would hardly permit knowledge of Khuzdul to be acquired by an outsider under any circumstance.



10.5 RUNNING MASS LAND BATTLES

The Usurper's reign provides ample opportunities to lead or fight in battles. Iron Crown's *War Law* board game contains rules and counters which can be adapted to any setting and situation in Middle-earth. When time is short, though, a gamemaster and players may require an easy and quick way of resolving a particular battle with just a few dice rolls. This section presents a simple set of rules for battles between armies of any sizes.

10.5.1 COMPUTING THE ARMY STRENGTH

The first step in a battle is to compute the relative strength of the two participating forces.

Determining the Exact Size of the Force

First, the army commander determines the exact number of soldiers in his force, divided by types (infantry, cavalry, scouts, etc.) and quality (level, equipment, race, nationality, etc). For gaming purposes, soldiers are usually standardized, with for instance all Éothraim horsemen having the same characteristics.

In order to simplify matters for the players and the Gamemaster, officers and non-commissioned officers are not included in this and following calculations. After all, they usually comprise only a small percentage of a given force.

Calculating the Soldiers' Battle Values

Second, the commander calculates the Battle Point Value (BPV) of each soldier. He starts the soldier's level. This number is modified by a number of Quality Modifiers and one Terrain Modifier (determined from the soldier's race). All the modifiers are cumulative, but a soldier cannot have a modified BPV of less than 1.

Example: *An Éothraim cavalryman (Fighter level 4 with chainmail) operating on his home plains has a BPV of 4 (level) +1 (good armor) -1 (barbarian) +3 (horse cavalry in field terrain) = 7. In a forest, he would have BPV 2 when on horseback, so he would most likely dismount and fight as an infantryman with BPV 4.*

Quality Modifiers Chart

Superior armor	+1
No armor	-1
Barbarian*	-1
Orc in sunlight	-2
Man in darkness	-2
Inspiration†	+1
Terrified†	-1
Starving	-1
Exhausted	-1
Unfamiliar terrain type	-1
Scout/Rogue	-1
Extensive preparations¥	+1

* Such troops have poor unit cohesion in battle, decreasing the effectiveness. Tribal societies (Éothraim, Dunlendings, Orcs, Lossoth, etc) are usually considered barbarians for this purpose.

† For instance by a Nazgûl's screams or Gandalf's presence.

¥ Only applicable for a force assaulting a fortress. The modifier represents such things as siege towers and protected battering rams, devices that must be constructed near the fortress and brought to the scene of the assault. These preparations take at least two days. In an assault without extensive preparations, the attacker has only ladders and improvised rams as assault equipment.

Terrain Modifiers Chart

Troop Type	Field	Hills	Forest	Mountain*	Underground	Desert†	Swamp*
Mannish infantry	±0	±0	±0	±0	§	±0	-1
Horse cavalry	+3	±0	-2	-3	Useless	+3	Useless
Camel cavalry††	+1	±0	-2	-2	Useless	+1	Useless
Dunnish chariots¥	+2	±0	-2	Useless	Useless	Useless	Useless
Elven infantry	±0	±0	+2	-1	-1	±0	±0
Dwarf	±0	±0	-1	+2	+2	-1	-2
Wose	±0	+0	+2	±0	#	-2	-1
Orc**	±0	±0	±0	±0	+1	±0	-1
Wolf cavalry	+2	+1	-1	±0	Useless	+2	-3
Mûmak	±0	±0	-5	-15	Useless	±0	-5

* No bonus for good armor due to its encumbrance.

† Troops wearing chain or plate armor are automatically exhausted by the heat during day-time. There are no such negative effects during night.

†† Camels cannot charge, which explains their low field modifier. Hence, camel cavalry is mainly used for reconnaissance and harassment. Horses encountering camels for the first time are usually frightened by the smell of the camels; this is represented by a -2 modifier on the horseman's BPV.

¥ The chariot is crewed by one warrior and one driver and drawn by two horses. When calculating the BPV, the driver is excluded.

# Use the darkness modifier.

** Including Uruk-hai, Trolls, and Olog-hai.

WAR-ELEPHANTS

A Mûmak, or "Oliphaunt," is the largest and most fearsome example of an Endorian war-elephant. They are exceptional shock weapons and wonderful archery platforms. Mûmakil generally operate together with infantry. This tactic protects animals' legs from enemy soldiers.

A Mûmak and its crew of one "driver" and four archers are jointly counted as one 35th level "soldier". While they are deadly opponents, but they are correspondingly difficult to raise and train. Mûmakil are also extremely expensive to maintain (requiring about one ton of fodder per day), especially outside their native browsing grounds. It is hardly surprising, then, that they are quite rare on the battlefields of northwestern Middle-earth.

10.5.2 CALCULATING FORCE STRENGTH

In the next step the commander calculates the Army Battle Value (ABV) of his force. It is done by adding all the soldiers' BPV together and dividing the sum by the number of soldiers in the weaker force. Round the result off to nearest figure. An example will show how these calculations are made.

> **Example:** *A force of 553 Éothraim warriors, serving Eldacar and operating on the steppe of Talath Harroch, encounters a band of 637 marauding Orcs. The sky is covered with clouds, saving the Orcs from the negative effects of sunlight. The Éothraim force has an ABV of* $7 \times 553 \div 553 = 7$. *An Orc warrior has a BPV of 5 (lvl) -1 (barbarian) = 4. The band's ABV is* $4 \times 637 \div 553 \approx 4.6$ *which is rounded off to 5.*

10.5.3 FORTIFICATION RULES

If one force is defending inside a fortress and the other force is trying to assault that fortification, the ABVs are calculated differently.

First, no Terrain Modifiers are used when computing the BPVs.

Second, all mounted troops are dismounted and serve as infantry.

Third, each fortress has Force Multiplier Value (FMV), ranging from 1 to 10 at the Gamemaster's discretion. The Army Battle Value of the defending force (before rounding) is multiplied by the FMV of its Fortress. Note that relatively fortifications qualify for the really high values. A few suggested examples follow:

Site	**Force Multiplier Value**
Angrenost (Isengard)	FMV 10
Minas Anor	FMV 9
Aglarond (The Hornburg)	FMV 8
Lond Ernil (Dol Amroth)	FMV 8
Minas Ithil	FMV 7
Pelargir	FMV 6
Osgiliath	FMV 5
Border Beacon	FMV 5-6
Stone fort in the Emyn Arnen	FMV 3-4

Fourth, determine how many soldiers can be stationed in a particular fortress. Then calculate how many enemies are involved in the actual assault. For instance, Minas Anor can accommodate a temporary garrison of 20-30,000 soldiers. It might be assailed by up to 100,000 attackers. A smaller fort might house a garrison of only 200 soldiers. Its small size might restrict the size of an attacking force to only 800 or so assailants.

10.5.4 RESOLVING THE BATTLE

A battle is resolved by the two army commanders, using the Resistance Table. Both make a roll, in which each pit his ABV against the opponent's ABV, using his Tactics bonus as modifier. Then they consult the "Battle Outcomes" to determine the outcome of the battle.

BATTLE OUTCOMES

Both failed their RRs: The commanders' plans disintegrate in chaos. The force with the strongest ABV controls the battlefield, but cannot pursue due to disorder. It is immobilized until the next day. The weaker force withdraws in disorder.

Both succeeded with the RRs: The force with the stronger ABV controls the battlefield, but the weaker force makes an orderly withdrawal, preventing pursuit.

One succeeded, one failed with the RRs: The succeeding commander gains a clear victory. The losing force is routed, and if the winner has cavalry, it may pursue.

FORTRESS ASSAULT OUTCOMES

Both failed their RRs: Assault failed and the attacker must withdraw in disorder. However, the victorious defender defender is also in disorder and cannot pursue.

Both succeeded with the RRs: Assault fails, but the assaulting force withdraws in order and remains outside the fort. It can perform a new assault attempt the next day. The victorious defender cannot utilize his success.

The assaulter failed, the defender succeeded: The assaulting force is routed and if the defender has cavalry, it may pursue.

The assaulter succeeded, the defender failed: The assault is successful and the fortress is taken. The surviving defenders are captured.

> **Example:** *The previously mentioned forces of Éothraim (ABV 7) and Orcs (ABV 5) clash. The Éothraim commander has Tactics30, while his Orc counterpart has Tactics20. The Northman rolls 38+30=68, which is more than the 44 required to withstand the Orcs' ferocity. The Orc commander rolls 24+20=44, which is less than the 56 needed to stop the Éothraim charge. The Orcs are routed and pursued by the mounted Northmen.*

10.5.5 DETERMINING THE AFTERMATH

When the events on the battlefield has been decided, the commanders shall determine the losses suffered by their respective forces. A force can suffer six fates in a battle or assault. The follow table show what losses it suffers in each outcome.

ARMY LOSSES

A victorious force: 5% killed, 10% wounded, 0% prisoners, 0% missing/stragglers.

The force withdraws in order: 5% killed, 10% wounded, 5% prisoners, 10 % missing/stragglers.

The force withdraws in disorder: 10% killed, 15% wounded, 10% prisoners, 15% missing/stragglers.

The force is routed but not pursued by cavalry: 15% killed, 15% wounded, 15% prisoners, 15% missing/stragglers.

The force is routed and pursued by cavalry: 25% killed, 15% wounded, 20 % prisoners, 20 % missing/stragglers.

A defeated fortress-defending force: 20% killed, 15% wounded, 65% prisoners, 0% missing/stragglers.

COMMENTS

Wounded soldiers: Those counted as wounded according to these calculations are well enough to stay with their force. Those that have suffered more serious injuries than that fall into the categories of killed (having died soon after the battle) or missing/stragglers (having been left behind). Usually, 1/6 of the wounded recover each week.

Prisoners: The fates of prisoners-of-war depend on their captors. Western armies often disarm and release their Mannish prisoners after a victory. For instance, after the battle at the Hornburg, the surrendering Dunlendings were allowed to return home after having sworn an oath not to attack Rohan again. Less civilized armies will enslave or slaughter their prisoners, depending of what is feasible at the moment. Evil creatures may even eat their prisoners. Few armies bother with capturing Orcs and Orcs rarely surrender.

Example: *The victorious Éothraim suffered comparatively light losses: 28 dead and 55 wounded.*

The Orc force was crushed and pursued with 159 killed. According to the calculations, 127 should be captured. However, the Gamemaster, knowing the Éothraim attitude towards these creatures, decides that these were killed, too, making it 286 dead.

Another 127 Orcs were scattered during the chaotic flight and never accounted for (missing/stragglers). Most of these probably died later from their serious wounds or decided that it was bad idea to return home in shame.

Only 128 unwounded and 96 wounded warriors eventually returned to their stronghold in the Ash Mountains.

10.5.6 THE INDIVIDUAL'S FATE

Each player character fighting in the battle must make a general Static Maneuver Roll to determine his fate. Characters that do not fight must only roll for their fate if their army is routed and pursued; in such a situation nobody is safe from the enemy soldiers.

The roll has two modifications: one for the character's weapon skill and one for the outcome of the battle. The result is interpreted in the Character Fate Result Table.

The character has a chance of becoming captured by the enemy, using the capture percentage found in the Army Loss table. If the character becomes a prisoner, he looses all his booty.

CHARACTER FATE ROLL MODIFICATIONS

+	best weapon skill bonus.
±0	Both commanders are successful.
+20	The character's commander was successful, while the enemy commander failed.
+30	The enemy army is routed *and* pursued *and* the character belongs to the cavalry.
-20	Both commanders failed the battle RRs.
-50	The character's commander failed, while the enemy commander was successful.
-60	The character's army is routed *and* pursued *and* the character is mounted.
-70	The character's army is routed *and* pursued *and* the character is on foot.

CHARACTER FATE RESULTS

Blunder: The character is killed in action.

Absolute failure: The character receives a +50 attack from a suitable enemy weapon (Gamemaster's choice) and gets no booty.

Failure: The character receives a +40 attack from a suitable enemy weapon (Gamemaster's choice) and gets no booty.

Partial success: The character receives a +30 attack from a suitable enemy weapon (Gamemaster's choice) and gets one roll with no modifier on the Booty Table.

Near success: The character receives a +20 attack from a suitable enemy weapon (Gamemaster's choice) and gets one roll with a +20 modifier on the Booty Table.

Success: The character receives a +10 attack from a suitable enemy weapon (Gamemaster's choice) and gets two rolls with a +40 modifier on the Booty Table.

Absolute success: The character receives no injuries and gets three rolls with a +60 modifier on the Booty Table.

Booty Chart

D100 (Open-ended)	Booty*
0-30	Nothing.
31-40	Shield.
41-50	Helmet.
51-60	Set of enemy weapons.
61-70	Injured enemy mount.
71-80	Set of enemy weapons and armor.
81-90	Ring or bracelet worth 1T10 sp.
91-100	Enemy mount with pack saddle and 100 lbs of supplies.
101-110	Enemy mount and set of enemy armor and weapons.
111-120	An officer with armor, weapons, and 2T10 sp in cash as prisoner.
121-130	Supply wagon with two oxen and 1000 lbs of supplies.
131-140	1T10 enemy mounts.
141-150	An enemy document (content of Gamemaster's choice).
151+	A high-ranking enemy officer with mount, armor, weapons, and 2D100 sp in cash as prisoner.

*If a roll result is not applicable in a certain situation, re-roll it.

Example: *The player character Éoric participates in the battle against the Orcs. His best weapon skill bonus is 69. He gets a Fate Roll modification of 69+30 (enemy routed and pursued and Éoric belongs to the cavalry) =99. His roll is 53+99=152, a Success result. The Gamemaster decides that he suffers a +10 scimitar attack, which fails to injure him.*

He also gets two +40 Booty Rolls. The first is a modified 93, giving him an enemy mount with pack saddle and 100 lbs of supplies. Since the Orcs do not use pack animals, the Gamemaster uses his judgment and decides that Éoric has liberated a Dorwinadan slave, used as a porter by the Orcs, with a load of 100 lbs of dried meat on his H-rack. Éoric, being a good man, gives the ex-slave his blanket and a flask of water and throws away the disgusting food. However, Éoric has most likely gained a friend for life, which may prove to be a better reward than loot. (And the Gamemaster can use the event as a starting point for a new adventure, bringing Éoric to Dorwinion, a place he previously had no reason to visit.)

The second roll is a modified 129, which the Gamemaster considers to be inappropriate, ordering a re-roll: a modified 83. Éoric finds a Gondorian ring, worth one silver piece, on an Orc corpse.

Since the Army Loss table decrees that 0% of the victors would be captured by the enemy, there is no risk that Éoric would become prisoner of the Orcs.

10.6 NAVAL BATTLES

At the time of the Kin-strife, sea battles were often little more than ship-borne melees resembling land battles. Ships of the period use neither large artillery nor rams. Instead, naval battles are boarding actions, with archers and marines fighting to capture or defend the ships.

In some cases, one (usually the weaker) side might huddle its ships together, forming a platform. Soldiers can then easily be shifted to threatened spots. In such a situation, a battle may somewhat resemble a fortress assault.

Hence, the army battle rules are easily adapted to the peculiarities of the maritime environment.

10.6.1 NAVAL BATTLE PROCEDURES

The Battle Point Value of the participating soldiers are calculated according to Section 10.51. We employ somewhat different Quality Modifiers and no terrain modifiers.

Naval Quality Modifiers Chart

Superior armor	+1
No armor	-1
Armed with bow	+1
Scout/Rogue	-1
Elf with sea experience	+1
Dwarf	-2
Barbarian*	-1
Man in darkness	-2
Inspiration	+1
Terrified	-1
Starving	-1
Exhausted	-1

* Such troops have poor unit cohesion in battle, decreasing the effectiveness.

10.6.2 CALCULATING SQUADRON STRENGTH

The Squadron Battle Value (SBV) is computed from the BPV of the squadron's marines and sailors in the same way as for the ABV of a land force.

10.6.3 RESOLVING THE BATTLE

The battle resolution rolls are done in the same fashion as in an army battle, with the commanders using their Naval Tactics bonus as modifiers.

The Gamemaster may give a negative modifier to both commanders' rolls if the battle is fought in bad weather, ranging from -10 (ordinary rain) to -50 (heavy winds with hard rain). The weather may affect one squadron more than the other. For instance, being upwind in a strong wind is always more advantageous than being downwind.

If one squadron has notable slower and clumsier ships than the other, the Gamemaster may penalize its commander by a -10 modification.

The naval battle requires different tables to determine the outcome and losses.

NAVAL BATTLE OUTCOMES

Both failed their RRs: The commanders' plans disintegrate in chaos. Combat quickly ceases as the two squadrons are separated by weather and command control failures.

Both succeeded with the RRs: The squadron with the stronger SBV is victorious, but the weaker squadron makes an orderly withdrawal, saving most of its ships.

One succeeded, one failed with the RRs: The succeeding commander gains a clear victory. The losing squadron is routed, with most of its ships captured, sunk or disabled.

NAVAL LOSSES

A victorious squadron: 5% killed, 10% wounded, 0% prisoners, 5% ships sunk or disabled, 0% ships lost to the enemy.

The squadron lost contact with enemy (both commanders failed their RRs): 5% killed, 10% wounded, 0% prisoners, 5% ships sunk or disabled, 0% ships lost to the enemy.

The squadron withdraws in order: 10% killed, 15% wounded, 5% prisoners, 10% ships sunk or disabled, 5% ships lost to the enemy.

The squadron is routed: 20/25%* killed, 25% wounded, 10/15%* prisoners, 30% ships sunk or disabled, 20% ships lost to the enemy.

* The first value is applied to crew members that can swim and the second to those that cannot.

10.6.4 THE INDIVIDUAL'S FATE

A character participating in a naval battle makes a Fate Roll in the manner outlined in Section 10.5.6, but with different die modifiers.

The result is interpreted in the same way. However, a character with no swimming skill level *or* wearing a chainmail or plate armor is automatically killed by an Absolute Failure result: he falls overboard and drowns.

The risk of being captured by the enemy is determined in the way described in Section 10.5.6.

Naval Character Fate Roll Modifications

+	best weapon skill bonus.
±0	Both commanders successful.
±0	Both commanders failed the battle RRs. If attacked, the character is most likely struck by an enemy missile. No booty rolls allowed, since there was little serious action.
+30	The character's commander was successful, while the enemy commander failed.
-50	The character's commander failed, while the enemy commander was successful.

NAVAL BOOTY CHART

There is a special Navy Booty Table, reflecting the nature of a naval battle.

Open 1D100	**Booty***
up to 30	Nothing
31-40	Shield
41-50	Helmet
51-60	Set of enemy weapons
61-70	Ring or bracelet worth 1T10 sp
71-80	Set of enemy weapons and armor
81-90	Purse with 2T10 sp in coins
91-100	Oak chest or barrel with 100 lbs of supplies†
101-110	An officer without equipment as prisoner†
111-120	An officer with armor, weapons, and 2T10 sp in cash as prisoner†
121-130	The treasury chest of an enemy ship, containing coins with a total value of 3T100 sp†
131-140	Small boat with 1000 lbs of supplies in barrels or chests†
141-150	An enemy document (content of Gamemaster's choice)†
151+	A high-ranking enemy officer with armor, weapons, and 2T100 sp in cash as prisoner†

* If a roll result is not applicable in a certain situation, re-roll it.

† This result is only applicable if the character's squadron captured at least one enemy ship.

10.7 SELECTED READING

The authors of this module have made creative use of a diverse range of secondary literature in imagining Gondorian economy, society, politics, law, and military organization during the period of the Kin-strife. While none of the contributors felt in any way bound by real-world analogies in their description of the Usurper's reign, gamemasters seeking further resources for developing aspects of their campaign may find some use in the bibliographic references listed below. References are listed according to subject matter.

Many of these topics have been and will continue to be explored—both with reference to the Kin-strife and to other periods of Gondorian history—in the Middle-earth gaming journal *Other Hands*. Users of this module who are interested in reading or publishing further material related to the Kin-strife in *Other Hands* should write to *Chris Seeman (PO Box 1213, Novato, CA 94948, USA; chris1224@aol.com)* for more information.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Crawford, Edward. "The Mode of Production in the Southern Kingdoms of Middle-earth." (1985) See p. 10-28 in *Some Light on Middle-earth*, The Tolkien Society.

A detailed "mock-historical" analysis of aspects of Gondorian society pertinent to the realm's overall organization during the Third Age. Crawford frequently draws upon real-world analogies for fleshing out the particulars of Gondor's social and economic structure in an often illuminating way.

Crone, Patricia. *Pre-Industrial Societies*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1989).

This is a recent comparative study of what pre-industrial societies tend to share in common, and what differentiates them from modern society. This is an easy-to-read orientation to an historically plausible and interesting campaign setting.

Finley, Moses I. *The Ancient Economy* (2nd ed.). London: The Hogarth Press (1985).

This brief tome offers a classical Greco-Roman model for imagining how ancient economies operate. Many of Finley's considerations play an important role in the description of Dor-en-Ernil's economy in this module.

Kautsky, John H. *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press (1982).

Another broadly comparative work that focuses on what pre-industrial political systems share in common over against modern and primitive societies, this book is a valuable resource for thinking about the driving forces behind the Kin-strife and how they might play themselves out in the course of a game.

Lenski, Gerhard E. *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press (1984).

This is the standard, introductory, English-language textbook on the subject of how human societies are organized in relation to different levels of technology. The section on advanced agrarian societies is highly pertinent to this module's presentation of Gondor.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (2 volumes). Berkeley: University of California Press (1968).

Weber's magnum opus provides a broad-ranging typology of different forms of society (often with reference to pre-industrial examples), which is referred to in the "Power and Privilege" section of this chapter (10.2.1). It is useful as a "check-list" of all the elements that a gamemaster must take into consideration when dealing with how a complex society like Gondor works.

POPULATION LEVELS

Beresford, Jason. "A response to 'Thoughts on the population of Gondor and Arnor'" *Other Hands 3*, p. 8-10 (1993).

Brolin, Gunnar. "Thoughts on the population of Gondor and Arnor" *Other Hands 3*, p. 4-7 (1993).

—. "More on population: a response to Jason Beresford" *Other Hands 4*, p. 22-23. (1994).

These three articles articulate the kind of assumptions that go into calculating relative population sizes for Gondor at the time of the Kin-strife. The figures used in this module were based on Brolin's analysis.

THE ROLE OF CITIES

Sjoberg, Gideon. *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present*. New York: The Free Press (1960).

This book remains the classic English-language work on its subject, and can be used in conjunction with the information in Section 10.1.1 of this chapter. Beyond containing a lot of interesting details about pre-industrial cities, the chief virtue of this book is that it focuses on how such cities are both necessary to and dependent upon a certain type of larger society. Sjoberg works at a very high level of generalization, and most of his insights are equally applicable to ancient and medieval models.

Waley, Daniel. *The City-Republics* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman (1980).

This book focuses on a particular type of pre-industrial city. It articulates many of the assumptions used in the presentation of Umbar chapter in this module.

Weber, Max. *The City*. New York: The Free Press (1958).

This book is a separately-published chapter from Weber's larger work (see above) which deals with the historical development of urban society up through late-medieval times. It attempts to distinguish how ancient Greco-Roman cities and medieval European cities differed from each other, which may prove useful for a gamemaster who wants to decide which kind of pre-industrial city model he or she prefers to use for a campaign.

RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING REALMS

Beresford, Jason. "Tarma Tar-Calion Revisited." *Other Hands 6/7*, p. 22-24 (1994).

Braund, David C. *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of Client Kingship*. London: Croom Helm (1984).

This book describes and analyzes the political dynamics of client-kingship in the context of an ancient empire's relationship to its less powerful but strategically important neighbors. Many aspects of it have been used to interpret Tolkien's references to

Seeman, Chris. "Beyond Anduin: Rhovanion as the northern frontier of Gondor." *Other Hands 1*, p. 23-26 (1993).

—. "Tarma Tar-Calion: an historical note on the haven of Umbar." *Other Hands 5*, p. 17-19 (1994).

All three of these articles deal with the ways in which Gondor's relationship to her neighbors (Rhovanion, Umbar, and Harad) contributed to the Kin-strife or to the rise of the Ship-kings that preceded it. The conclusions they draw have been incorporated into the historical background for this module as well as that of the forthcoming Southern Gondor realm module.

Tuchman, Barbara. *In a Distant Mirror: the Calamitous Fourteenth Century*. New York: Knopf (1978).

This book is a history of 14th century Europe in which the reader follows the career of a prominent French nobleman. There are a number of situations in the book that easily can be transferred to mid-Third Age Gondor, among others the background of the "Ratcatcher" adventure. It also gives an introduction to the worldview of the nobility of a pre-industrial country (such as Gondor)—a way of looking at the world that is quite different from what we of the 20th century are used to.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS AND INTRIGUE

Foot, M.R.D. *Resistance*. London: Eyre Methuen (1976).

This book is a very good source on the methods and dangers of underground struggle against a tyranny. Even though Europe of the 1940s and Middle-earth of the 1440s are two very different places, the basic concepts of resistance operations remain the same. The book enabled the lengthy discourse on the loyalist movement of this module. Its author was one of the leading British experts on clandestine and resistance operations in Europe during World War Two.

Seeman, Chris. "A journey in the dark." *Other Hands 3*, p. 13-18 (1993).

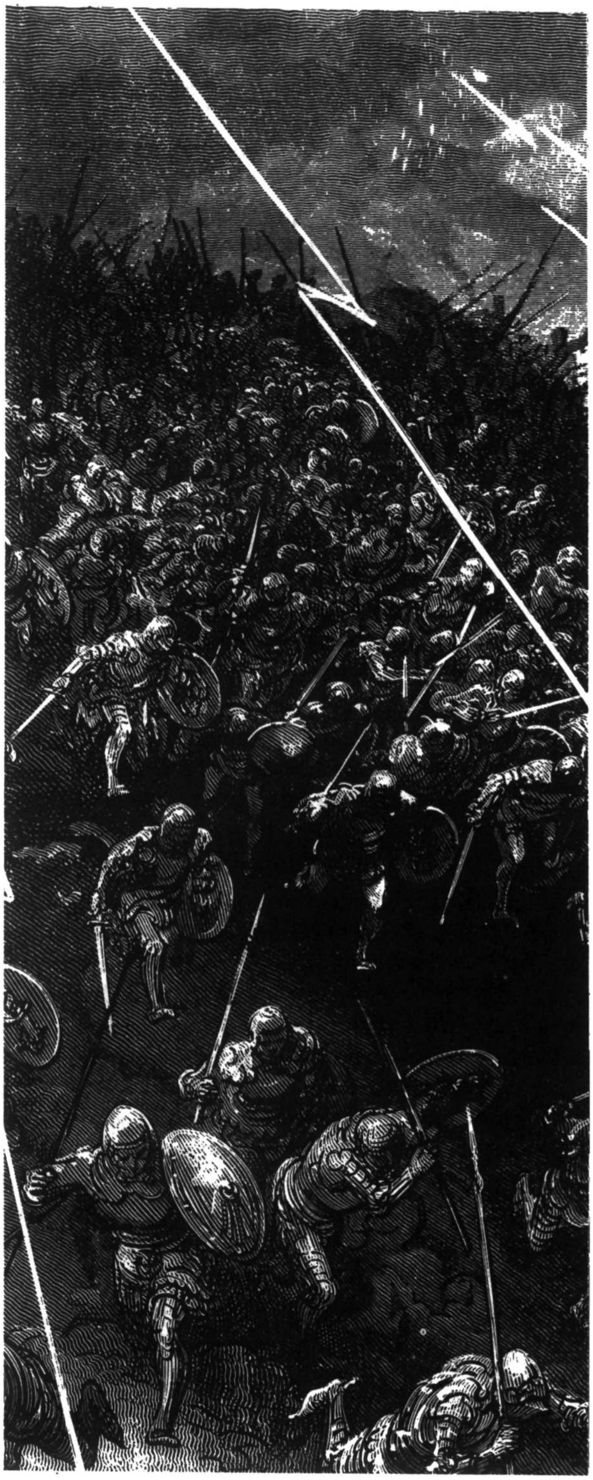
—. "Eyes of the Blind Night." *Other Hands 6/7* (1994).

—. et al. "The Cult of Benish Armon." *Other Hands 6/7*, p. 7-14 (1994).

These articles deal with the theme connecting the legacy of Queen Berûthiel to the Kin-strife and beyond. They provide further treatment of the cult and the Kuilëondo (which will play an important role in the upcoming revised *Umbar*) not included *The Kin-strife.*

Tuchman, Barbara. *The Zimmerman Telegram*. New York: Macmillan (1966).

This book contains a lot of ideas for developing codes and ciphers for adventures involving clandestine groups and intrigue. It was used as a basis for the discussion in this chapter (see Section 10.4).



11.1 MERP/RM NPC TABLE

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM	Notes
THE USURPER'S REIGN										
The Royal Family										
Castamir	30	158	Pl/17	30	N	N	150ss	125sp	15	Dúnadan Ranger
Castaher	11	135	Pl/19	55	Y15	N	130bs	110ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Castarion	9	122	Pl/17	20	N	N	115bs	100sp	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Mûrabêth	12	70	No/1	5	N	N	70da	—	10	Black Númenórean Scholar/Artisan
Morlaen	11	133	Pl/18	50	Y	Y	130bs	110cp	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Caramir	10	69	SL/5	10	N	N	60ss	—	0	Dúnedan Scholar/Artisan
Calimon	10	123	Ch/13	20	N	N	120bs	105ss	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Elendin	4	64	Ch/13	15	N	N	80bs	55ss	0	Dúnadan Warrior
Duranil	7	109	Ch/15	40	Y	A/L	105bs	80ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Alandur	4	64	Ch/13	15	N	N	80bs	55ss	0	Dúnadan Warrior
The Once and Future King										
Eldacar	31	173	Ch/14	30	N	A/L	130ba	130cp	10	Dúnadan Ranger
Aerinel	10	59	No/1	5	N	N	60ss	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Aldamir	28	143	Ch/16	45	Y10	A/L	150bs	155cp	5	Dúnadan Ranger
Beren Harnastin	8	75	Ch/14	35	Y	A/L	95bs	75ja	5	Dúnadan Ranger
Vidurafin	15	153	Ch/14	55	Y5	A/L	140bs	115cp	10	Northman Warrior
Vidustain	12	133	Ch/13	50	Y5	N	120bs	110cp	5	Northman Warrior
Harith	10	113	Ch/13	20	N	N	120bs	105co	5	Southron Warrior
The Enemy										
Adûnaphel	32	160	Pl/19	75	N	N	160bs	125cp	15	Nazgûl
Zimrakhil	10	66	No/1	5	N	N	10da	—	0	Southron/Dúnadan Mage
Belphegor	10	129	No/1	45	N	N	120mr	101mr	25	Southron/Dúnadan Warrior Monk
Iriel* *(human)*	15	150	SL/5	30	N	N	130ss	105cp	15	Ethir Ranger
Iriel* *(panther)*	15	150	SL/4	50	N	N	150Mcl	130Mbi	50	Panther
Colfen	12	90	RL/9	30	N	N	120bs	95sl	10	Ethir Ranger
Neithan*	12	93	Ch/13	55	Y10	N	125bs	100lb	10	Dúnadan Ranger
PELARGIR										
Other NPCs										
Carnendil	7	54	No/1	—	N	N	45da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Carnion	7	61	SL/6	20	N	A	85ss	75da	10	Rural Man Scout
Celebriel	6	42	No/1	10	N	N	40da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Dórmir	6	44	SL/5	5	N	N	45qs	—	0	Rural Man Scholar/Artisan
Híriel	6	45	No/1	5	N	N	45da	—	0	Rural Woman Scholar/Artisan
Lidimir	7	61	No/1	15	N	N	90da	—	15	Gondorian Scout
Sinyadal	3	56	SL/5	15	N	N	70cl	45da	5	Gondorian Scout
Tárain	9	61	No/1	5	N	N	55ss	—	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Targon	9	122	Ch/14	40	Y5	A/L	110bs	100sp	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Thorondil	8	120	RL/8	15	N	N	115ba	95ss	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Adventure: Candle Burning, Burning Bright										
Hirluin	3	55	SL/5	10	N	N	65bs	45da	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Khoradûr	8	57	No/1	10	N	N	55bs	55da	0	Black Númenórean Scholar/Artisan
Telerien	8	54	No/1	10	N	N	50da	—	0	Black Númenórean Scholar/Artisan
Adventure: The Charred Carts										
Parmandil	6	40	No/1	—	N	N	35da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Aurandir	8	111	Ch/13	15	N	N	105bs	85ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Adventure: Guards, Crows, and Horrid Scum										
Morgalad	11	133	Pl/18	50	Y10	Y	130bs	110ss	0	Dúnadan Warrior

11.1 MERP/RM NPC TABLE

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM	Notes
UMBAR										
Telemnar	9	110	Pl/17	20	N	N	115ss	95ja	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Gordacar	9	61	No/1	5	N	N	55da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Marmedon	10	127	Ch/16	50	Y5	A/L	125bs	110ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Mardil	6	98	Ch/15	30	Y	N	100ma	75bs	0	Dúnadan Warrior
Menelmir	11	136	Ch/15	55	Y10	A/L	120bs	105ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Merul	6	43	No/1	10	N	N	40da	—	0	Southron Scholar/Artisan
Adventure: The Shadow of Darkness										
Girion	3	37	SL/5	15	N	N	60cl	45da	15	Dúnadan Scout
Hunthor	1	25	No/1	15	N	N	45da	30qs	5	Gondorian Scout
Lindorië	10	78	SL/5	20	N	A	110ss	80da	10	Eriadoran Ranger
Telemnar	8	59	SL/5	10	N	N	60ss	40da	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Ulbar	6	45	No/1	10	N	N	40da	—	0	Gondorian Animist
Fíriel	1	14	No/1	5	N	N	15da	—	5	Gondorian Civilian
Tuor	2	21	No/1	5	N	N	20cl	—	0	Gondorian Civilian
Common cultist	2	20	No/1	—	N	N	20da	—	0	Gondorian Civilian
Cemendur	7	109	SL/5	45	Y	A/L	105bs	82cp	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Colfen's henchmen	4	45	SL/5	15	N	N	70ss	50da	5	Ethir Scout
Adventure: Between Land and Sea										
Krobon	7	66	RL/10	15	N	A	95bs	70cp		Gondorian Ranger
Adventure: A Stray Word										
Rhavas	3	34	No/1	15	N	N	60cl	40da	5	Southron Scout
Tergon	4	30	No/1	10	N	N	30da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Perion	4	68	SL/5	10	N	N	85cl	55ss	10	Gondorian Warrior
LOND ERNIL										
Adrazôr	4(14)	70	No/1	—	N	N	—	—	15	Dúnadan Warrior, crippled by illness.
Aradan	12	140	Pl/20	55	Y10	A/L	140bs	120ml	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Giladan	10	67	No/1	10	N	N	65bs	60ss	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Tirazôr	11	69	No/1	5	N	N	60ss	60da	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Beregond	8	112	Ch/16	40	Y	A/L	110ml	100bs	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Halbarad	7	109	Ch/16	45	Y	A/L	105bs	82ml	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Melrandir	8	58	No/1	5	N	N	45da	—	5	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Galbar	4	44	No/1	15	N	N	70ss	50da	5	Gondorian Scout
Daeron	6	98	Ch/15	30	Y	N	100bs	75da	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Adventure: A Death In the Family										
Maeglin	11	136	Ch/15	55	Y	A/L	120bs	105cp	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Míriel	6	41	No/1	5	N	N	30da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Adventure: Revolt of the Knights										
Borgil	3	61	Ch/16	40	Y	A/L	70bs	50ml	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Ioreth	2	29	No/1	15	N	N	45da	—	5	Gondorian Civilian
Perion	7	60	no/1	20	N	N	85ss	70da	10	Dúnadan Scout
Adventure: Hunting Iriel										
Amrukh	7	61	SL/5	15	N	N	90bs	60da	5	Southron Scout
OSGILIATH										
Angbor	8	113	Ch/13	15	N	N	115bs	95ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Gelmir	7	109	Ch/15	40	Y	A/L	105bs	80ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Damrod	8	118	Ch/15	45	Y5	A/L	110bs	95ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Alatar	40(80)	190	RL/12	115	N	(A/L)	195qs	240lb	95	Istar Animist/Ranger
Brenith	5	51	SL/5	20	N	N	80ss	60da	10	Gondorian Scout

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM	Notes
Cealen	7	66	RL/10	15	N	A/L	95ba	70ss	10	Gondorian Ranger
Clennan	6	61	RL/9	35	Y	N	90bs	60ja	10	Gondorian Ranger
Oxrandir	6	40	No/1	5	N	N	30da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Terieth	6	39	No/1	5	N	N	30da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Tirion	5	40	No/1	5	N	N	25ss	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Adventure: The Memory of Evil										
Estel	1	12	No/1	5	N	N	—	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Rastarin	8	116	RL/7	20	N	N	110ba	95bs	5	Gondorian Warrior
Mordulin	5	34	No/1	5	N	N	30da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
MINAS ANOR										
Ciryang	10	121	SL/5	20	N	N	120ss	100da	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Coratar	10	61	No/1	5	N	N	60ss	55da	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Borondir	12	138	Ch/16	60	Y10	A/L	140bs	120ml	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Finrod	8	52	SL/5	10	N	N	55bs	55ss	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Culcamalin	8	110	Ch/15	45	Y	A/L	115sc	90ml	0	Southron Warrior
Aegnor	4	34	No/1	5	N	N	35ss	35da	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Curunír	50(100)	200	RL/12	110	N	(A/L)	100bs	25sp	45	Istar Mage/Alchemist
Esteliel Harnastin	3	24	No/1	5	N	N	25da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Haleth	8	50	No/1	5	N	N	50da	—	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Lórin	8	55	No/1	5	N	N	40da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Adventure: Loyal to Whom?										
Irdamir	8	75	SL/5	35	N	A/L	95ss	75cp	10	Dúnadan Ranger
Ulrad	4	69	No/1	15	N	N	72bs	52ja	0	Gondorian Warrior
Anborn	6	98	Ch/15	30	Y	N	100bs	75ss	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Common cabal member	2	20	No/1	—	N	N	20da	—	0	Civilian
Adventure: The Tomb Robbers										
Goromil	8	51	No/1	—	N	N	40da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Amdir	7	111	Ch/14	25	N	A/L	115th	90ss	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Harmandil	2	48	No/1	5	N	N	50da	—	0	Gondorian Warrior
Neldorn	6	53	SL/5	20	N	N	80ss	65da	10	Gondorian Scout
Ringmir	5	41	SL/5	10	N	N	45ss	45cl	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Saeros	4	40	SL/5	10	N	N	65ss	45da	10	Gondorian Scout
MINAS ITHIL										
Heruvorn	6	99	Ch/13	20	N	N	90bs	75da	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Hador	7	109	Ch/15	40	Y	A/L	105bs	80ss	10	Dúnadan Warrior
Karan	10	131	Ch/15	55	Y	Y	130sc	101cp	10	Haradan Warrior
Pallando	40(60)	180	RL/12	90	N	(A/L)	185qs	180lb	45	Istar Ranger/Animist
Adventure: Spies at the Tower of the Moon										
Falathar	5	32	No/1	—	N	N	—	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Aerin	3	31	No/1	5	N	N	—	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Herion	4	35	No/1	5	N	N	32da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Boron	4	32	No/1	—	N	N	25da	—	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Bregor	8	117	RL/8	40	Y	N	110bs	86ja	5	Gondorian Warrior
Findegil	7	105	SL/5	20	N	N	105sp	86ss	10	Gondorian Warrior
Miriel	2	30	No/1	20	N	N	42da	—	10	Gondorian Scout
Derufin	4	69	No/1	15	N	N	72bs	52cl	10	Gondorian Warrior
Ragnor	10	80	SL/5	25	N	N	95da	—	10	Gondorian Scout
Varak	5	51	SL/5	20	N	N	80da	—	5	Gondorian Scout

11.1 MERP/RM NPC TABLE

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM	Notes
Adventure: The Wolf Cubs										
Aelindur	5	36	No/1	5	N	N	—	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Gethron/Beregar	2	35	SL/5	20	N	N	52da	37sl	5	Dúnadan Scout
Hargon	6	41	SL/5	10	N	N	45qs	—	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Malloriel/Morwen	1	26	SL/5	20	N	N	40da	32sl	10	Dúnadan Scout
Rohtur	6	43	No/1	10	N	N	40qs	—	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Beregar's buddies	2	32	SL/5	15	N	N	50da	35sl	5	Gondorian Scouts
Adventure: The Distressed Husband										
Barahir	5	34	No/1	5	N	N	30da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Ariel	4	30	No/1	—	N	N	—	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan, a crippled leg
Celebrindor	7	109	Ch/16	45	Y	A/L	105bs	82ml	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Faramir	6	98	Ch/15	30	Y	N	100ma	75bs	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Ulrad	3	56	SL/5	15	N	N	70cl	45da	5	Gondorian Scout
Fíriel	2	32	SL/5	15	N	N	50da	35sl	5	Gondorian Scout
THE PALE RIDERS										
Evit	9	127	Ch/13	40	Y	N	110bs	100cp	5	Sagath Warrior
Guton	8	120	Ch/13	30	Y	N	105bs	90cp	5	Sagath Warrior
Mahrbrand	5	81	Ch/13	15	N	N	90bs	55da	10	Northman Warrior
Slovas	7	109	Ch/13	30	Y	N	100bs	90cp	5	Sagath Warrior
Wulfr	10	84	SL/6	15	N	N	100lb	80bs	10	Northman Ranger
RATCATCHER										
Faramir	8	75	Ch/14	35	Y	A/L	95bs	75cp	10	Dúnadan Ranger
Raltin	8	117	RL/8	40	Y	N	110sp	86ja	5	Daen Warrior
Thrangir	7	66	RL/10	15	N	A/L	95sp	70sl	10	Daen Ranger
Torgir	4	68	SL/5	10	N	N	85bs	55da	5	Gondorian Warrior
BERGIL'S ODYSSEY										
Bergil's Friends										
Morwen	4	32	No/1	5	N	N	25da	—	0	Gondorian Civilian
Lotharion	5	36	No/1	5	N	N	—	—	0	Gondorian Scholar/Artisan
Team Grey										
Galad	6	99	RL/9	20	N	N	100ss	80sl	5	Gondorian Warrior
Beldin	5	52	SL/6	15	N	N	85ss	55da	10	Gondorian Scout
Carnendil	4	45	SL/5	15	N	N	70qs	50da	10	Gondorian Scout
Iorlas	4	44	No/1	20	N	N	75da	—	10	Gondorian Scout
Raniel	4	40	No/1	15	N	N	75da	—	10	Gondorian Scout
In the Red House										
Meneldor	4	29	No/1	5	N	N	25da	—	0	Dúnadan Scholar/Artisan
Túriel	4	70	RL/7	15	N	N	85bs	55lb	5	Dúnadan Warrior
CALENARDHON DURING THE KIN-STRIFE										
Henderch	10	130	Ch/15	40	Y	N	150bs	110cb	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Finlong	12	100	Pl/17	45	Y	N	100bs	110cb	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Sorondothor	13	130	Pl/17	50	Y	N	130sc	120cb	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Darion										
Vardamavi	6	80	SL/5	40	Y	N	80da	90sb	5	Dúnadan Warrior
Astrith	10	100	No/1	60	Y	N	120bs	160sb	25	Dúnadan Ranger

Weapons: ba — battleaxe, bs — broadsword, cl — club, cp — composite bow, da — dagger, ja — javelin, lb — longbow, ma — mace, ml — mounted lance, mr — martial arts, qs — quarterstaff, sb — shortbow, sl — sling, sp — spear, ss — shortsword, th — two-handed sword

*May possess and use Tevildo's Jewel, thus gaining special abilities.

11.2.1 TROOP TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

The following paragraphs outline the most common troop types in Gondor in 1441 and their equipment.

GONDOR'S ARMY

Line infantry: broadsword, shortsword, spear, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Mounted infantry: broadsword, shortsword, spear, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Anfalas archers: composite bow, broadsword, rigid leather armour and helmet.

Light infantry (reconnaissance troops): composite bows, shortsword, soft leather armour, shield, and helmet. They are often recruited among trappers and hunters of Gondor's wilderness regions.

CASTAMIR'S MERCENARIES

Southron medium cavalry: scimitar, lance, rigid leather armour, shield, and helmet.

Southron archers: composite bow, scimitar, rigid leather armour, and helmet.

Daen light infantry: uses a variety of weapons: broadsword, shortsword, handaxe, club, javelin, spear, etc. All carry shields and some have soft leather armour.

Daen slingers: sling, shortsword, no armour.

Variag infantry: long spear, soft leather armour, and helmet.

GONDOR'S NAVY

Marine: broadsword, composite bow, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Sailor: shortsword, soft leather armour, helmet

DOR-EN-ERNIL'S TROOPS

The Knights (heavy cavalry): lance, broadsword, platemail, shield, and helmet.

The Esquires (medium cavalry): lance, broadsword, chainmail, shield, and helmet

Men-at-arms: broadsword, spear or composite bow, chainmail, shield, and helmet

Yeoman archers: longbow, broadsword, chainmail and helmet.

Verderers: longbow, broadsword, rigid leather armour, shield, and helmet.

ELDACAR'S TROOPS

Éothraim cavalry: spear, broadsword, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Northman infantry: broadsword, composite bow, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Northman recon: broadsword, composite bow, rigid leather armour, shield, and helmet.

11.2.2 GAME STATISTICS

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM	Notes
General Gondorian Characters										
City Guardsman	3	72	RL/10	35	Y	L	70sp	60ss	10	Warrior
Crow (common)	3	38	SL/5	15	N	N	70da	45cl	5	Scout
Crow (elite)	5	50	SL/5	20	N	N	80ss	60da	5	Scout
Thug	3	54	SL/5	35	N	N	75da	75qs	10	Scout
Gondorian Troops in Castamir's Army										
Line infantry (elite)	5	88	Ch/16	40	Y5	A/L	95bs	75sp	5	Warrior
Line infantry	3	65	Ch/14	30	Y5	A/L	80bs	65sp	5	Warrior
Anfalas archer	4	70	RL/9	5	N	N	62bs	92cp	10	Warrior
Light infantry	6	90	SL/5	10	Y	N	90ss	90cp	10	Ranger
Mercenaries in Castamir's Army										
Daen infantry	3	60	SL/5	40	Y	N	70sp	45bs	5	Warrior
Daen slinger	3	60	No/1	15	N	N	70sl	45ss	5	Warrior
Haradan archer	4	70	RL/9	5	N	N	62sc	92cp	10	Warrior
Haradan cavalry	4	65	RL/10	20	Y	A/L	80ml	60sc	0	Warrior
<Medium Horse>	3	130	No/3	20	—	—	LTr50	—	30	Unarmoured, fast
Variag infantry	4	70	SL/6	40	N	Y	70sp	50da	10	Warrior
Gondorian Navy Crews										
Marine	4	70	Ch/14	5	Y	A	80bs	85cp	10	Warrior
Sailor	3	54	SL/5	35	N	N	75ss	75da	10	Scout
Dor-en-Ernil's Troops										
Knight	9	125	Pl/19	35	Y	A/L	125bs	115ml	5	Warrior
<Heavy Horse>	4	155	No/3	25	—	—	LTr65	—	25	Unarmoured, fast
Esquire	4	75	Ch/15	35	Y5	A/L	85ml	80bs	10	Warrior
<Medium Horse>	3	145	No/3	20	—	—	LTr50	—	30	Unarmoured, fast
Man-at-Arms	4	75	Ch/14	30	Y5	A/L	87bs	62sp	10	Warrior
Yeoman archer	4	70	Ch/13	5	N	N	62bs	92lb	10	Warrior
Verderer	9	110	RL/9	35	Y	N	101bs	88lb	20	Ranger
Eldacar's Troops										
Éothraim cavalry	4	65	Ch/13	20	Y	N	80sp	60bs	0	Warrior
<Medium Horse>	3	130	No/3	20	—	—	LTr50	—	30	Unarmoured, fast
Northman infantry	3	50	Ch/14	25	Y	A	70bs	65cp	0	Warrior
Northman recon	6	90	RL/9	10	Y	N	90bs	90cp	10	Ranger
The Sagath										
Sagath cavalry	4	70	RL/9	20	Y	N	60sp	90cp	0	Warrior
<Light Horse>	2	110	No/3	25	—	—	MTr35	—	25	Unarmoured, very fast
The Daen Lintis										
Warrior (normal)	3	60	SL/5	40	Y	N	70sp	45bs	10	Warrior
Warrior (elite)	8	120	RL/9	30	Y	A	100sp	90ja	5	Warrior, a few own chainmail
<Light Horse>	2	110	No/3	25	—	—	MTr35	—	25	Unarmoured, very fast

Weapons: ba — battleaxe, bs — broadsword, cl — club, cp — composite bow, da — dagger, ja — javelin, lb — longbow, ml — mounted lance, qs — quarterstaff, sc — scimitar, sl — sling, sp — spear, ss — shortsword

*Race noted when not obvious.

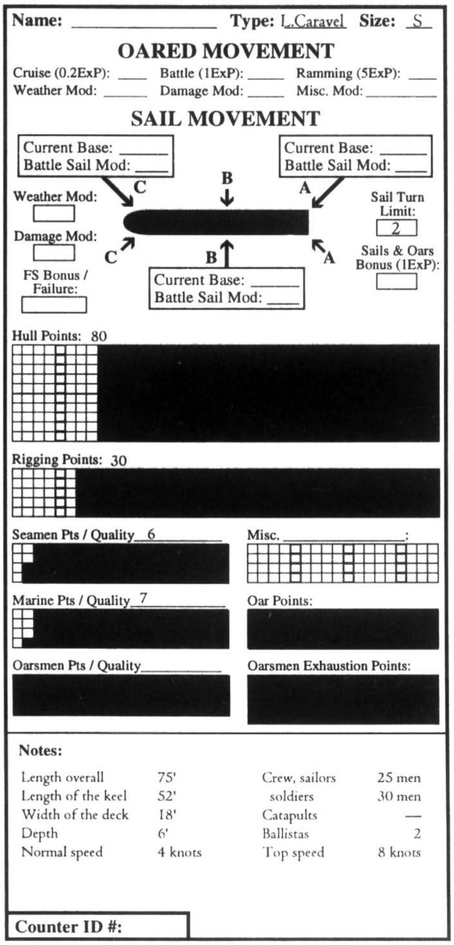
This section presents data for the most common warships in the navies of Gondor and her neighbours during the first half of the 15th century of the Third Age. They are all sailing vessels with ocean-going capabilities.

More information on military and civilian shipping in the Bay of Belfalas is found in the *Southern Gondor* module, which *inter alia* deals with civilian shipping and the naval developments after the Kin-strife.

These ships are presented using "Ship Record Sheets" from *Sea Law.*™ The format will help those GMs using *Sea Law* to handle naval conflict in their campaigns. For GMs using ***MERP*** only, the necessary information, on each individual ship, is given in the "Notes" section of the sheets.

The Caravel (S. "Rochros")

The caravel is a small lateen-rigged ship used for coastal trade and as a scout ship. Since it is highly maneuverable and relatively fast, it is also used for raids. It cannot stay at sea for a long time, rarely more than 2 months.



Name: ______ **Type:** L.Caravel **Size:** S

OARED MOVEMENT

Cruise (0.2ExP): ___ Battle (1ExP): ___ Ramming (5ExP): ___
Weather Mod: ___ Damage Mod: ___ Misc. Mod: ___

SAIL MOVEMENT

Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___
Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___
Weather Mod:
Sail Turn Limit: 2
Damage Mod:
Sails & Oars Bonus (1ExP):
FS Bonus / Failure:
Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___

Hull Points: 80

Rigging Points: 30

Seamen Pts / Quality 6
Misc. ___:
Marine Pts / Quality 7
Oar Points:
Oarsmen Pts / Quality ___
Oarsmen Exhaustion Points:

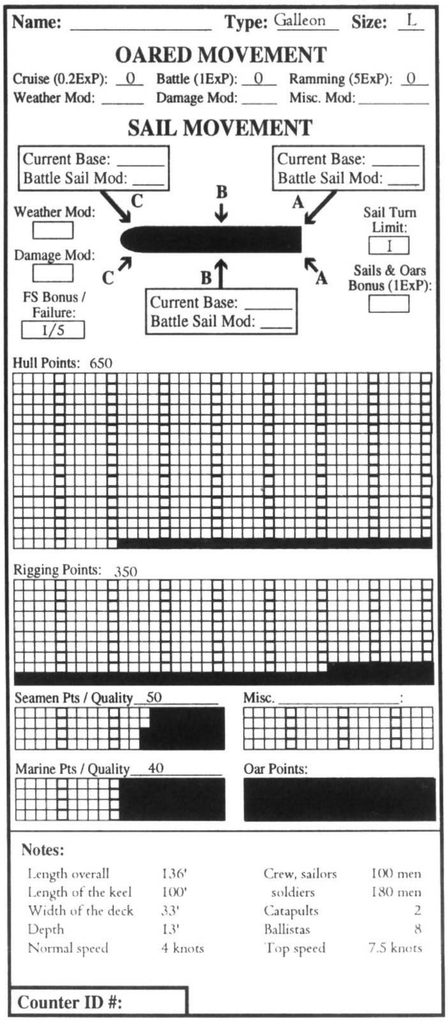
Notes:

Length overall	75'	Crew, sailors	25 men
Length of the keel	52'	soldiers	30 men
Width of the deck	18'	Catapults	—
Depth	6'	Ballistas	2
Normal speed	4 knots	Top speed	8 knots

Counter ID #:

The Galleon (S. "Gaervinas")

The galleon plays the same role as the larger carracks: flagship or a strong backbone in a squadron. It is faster than a carrack of the same size and has about the same endurance, but cannot take as many soldiers. The standard Gaervinas has three masts. Some of the largest even possessed four, though these leviathans were less maneuverable and as many were claimed by the sea as were lost in combat.



Name: ______ **Type:** Galleon **Size:** L

OARED MOVEMENT

Cruise (0.2ExP): 0 Battle (1ExP): 0 Ramming (5ExP): 0
Weather Mod: ___ Damage Mod: ___ Misc. Mod: ___

SAIL MOVEMENT

Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___
Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___
Weather Mod:
Sail Turn Limit: 1
Damage Mod:
Sails & Oars Bonus (1ExP):
FS Bonus / Failure: 1/5
Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___

Hull Points: 650

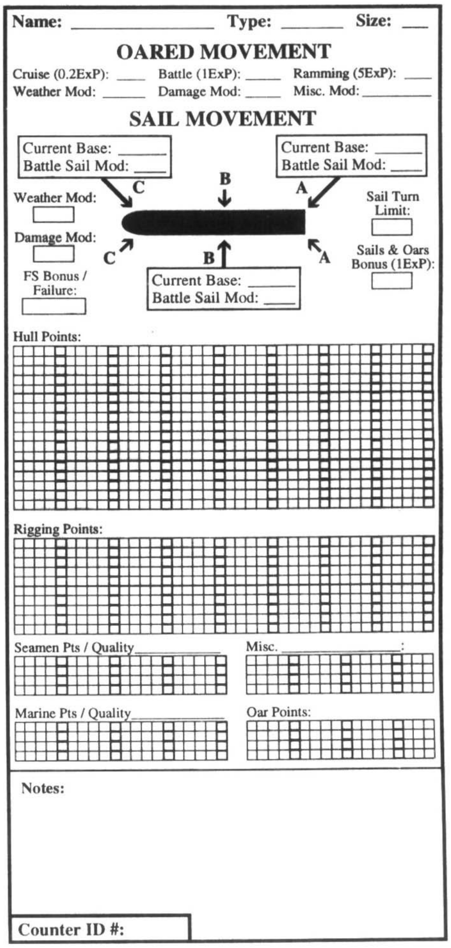
Rigging Points: 350

Seamen Pts / Quality 50
Misc. ___:
Marine Pts / Quality 40
Oar Points:

Notes:

Length overall	136'	Crew, sailors	100 men
Length of the keel	100'	soldiers	180 men
Width of the deck	33'	Catapults	2
Depth	13'	Ballistas	8
Normal speed	4 knots	Top speed	7.5 knots

Counter ID #:



Name: ______ **Type:** ___ **Size:** ___

OARED MOVEMENT

Cruise (0.2ExP): ___ Battle (1ExP): ___ Ramming (5ExP): ___
Weather Mod: ___ Damage Mod: ___ Misc. Mod: ___

SAIL MOVEMENT

Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___
Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___
Weather Mod:
Sail Turn Limit:
Damage Mod:
Sails & Oars Bonus (1ExP):
FS Bonus / Failure:
Current Base: ___ Battle Sail Mod: ___

Hull Points:

Rigging Points:

Seamen Pts / Quality ___
Misc. ___:
Marine Pts / Quality ___
Oar Points:

Notes:

Counter ID #:

Three Carrack (S. "Cairon") Models

The carrack, a bulky and big ship type, is the most popular man-of-war. It is built in three sizes.

The *large carrack* is rare due to its sizeable construction cost. It is mainly used as a flagship for a group of smaller ships. A large carrack may have three or four masts, depending on its size. Its endurance is four months at sea.

The *regular carrack* is three-masted and fairly expensive. On the other hand, its size and fighting strength make it popular as a man-of-war. Its endurance is three months at sea.

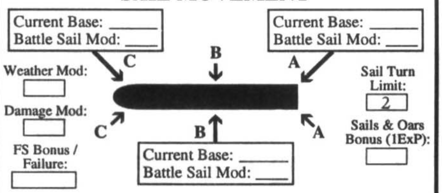
The *small carrack* is similar to the previous one, though much smaller. It is also used as a merchant vessel. Its endurance is three months at sea.

Name: ______________ **Type:** S.Carrack **Size:** S

OARED MOVEMENT

Cruise (0.2ExP): ____ Battle (1ExP): ____ Ramming (5ExP): ____
Weather Mod: ____ Damage Mod: ____ Misc. Mod: ________

SAIL MOVEMENT


Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____
Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____
C
B
A
Weather Mod:
Sail Turn Limit:
2
Damage Mod:
C
B
A
Sails & Oars Bonus (1ExP):
FS Bonus / Failure:
Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____

Hull Points: 120

Rigging Points: 60

Seamen Pts / Quality 13 **Misc.** ____________:

Marine Pts / Quality 15 **Oar Points:**

Oarsmen Pts / Quality ________ **Oarsmen Exhaustion Points:**

Notes:

Length overall	80'	Crew, sailors	40 men
Length of the keel	56'	soldiers	80 men
Width of the deck	27'	Catapults	1
Depth	9'	Ballistas	2
Normal speed	4 knots	Top speed	7.5 knots

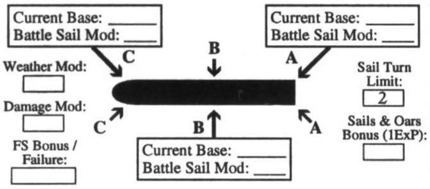
Counter ID #:

Name: ______________ **Type:** M.Carrack **Size:** M

OARED MOVEMENT

Cruise (0.2ExP): ____ Battle (1ExP): ____ Ramming (5ExP): ____
Weather Mod: ____ Damage Mod: ____ Misc. Mod: ________

SAIL MOVEMENT


Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____
Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____
C
B
A
Weather Mod:
Sail Turn Limit:
2
Damage Mod:
C
B
A
Sails & Oars Bonus (1ExP):
FS Bonus / Failure:
Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____

Hull Points: 190

Rigging Points: 95

Seamen Pts / Quality 20 **Misc.** ____________:

Marine Pts / Quality 20 **Oar Points:**

Oarsmen Pts / Quality ________ **Oarsmen Exhaustion Points:**

Notes:

Length overall	125'	Crew, sailors	65 men
Length of the keel	85'	soldiers	150 men
Width of the deck	34'	Catapults	2
Depth	12'	Ballistas	6
Normal speed	4 knots	Top speed	7 knots

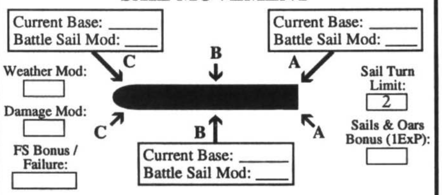
Counter ID #:

Name: ______________ **Type:** L.Carrack **Size:** L

OARED MOVEMENT

Cruise (0.2ExP): ____ Battle (1ExP): ____ Ramming (5ExP): ____
Weather Mod: ____ Damage Mod: ____ Misc. Mod: ________

SAIL MOVEMENT


Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____
Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____
C
B
A
Weather Mod:
Sail Turn Limit:
2
Damage Mod:
C
B
A
Sails & Oars Bonus (1ExP):
FS Bonus / Failure:
Current Base: ______
Battle Sail Mod: ____

Hull Points: 260

Rigging Points: 130

Seamen Pts / Quality 27 **Misc.** ____________:

Marine Pts / Quality 30 **Oar Points:**

Oarsmen Pts / Quality ________ **Oarsmen Exhaustion Points:**

Notes:

Length overall	144'	Crew, sailors	120 men
Length of the keel	98'	soldiers	300 men
Width of the deck	45'	Catapults	3
Depth	14'	Ballistas	8
Normal speed	4 knots	Top speed	6.5 knots

Counter ID #:

Notes

Construction: The height of an ordinary ship is usually proportional to the depth. The top of the main deck is about the same distance from the water line as the keel. each deck in the forecastle or the sern-castle is usually some 5'-7' above the main deck. The fore castle is usually only one deck above the main deck, while the stern-castlecan be up to three or even four decks above the main deck on large ships as large carracks and galleons.

Crew: The listed sum of sailors and soldiers gives the manning maximum. It is possible to sail a ship with half the number of sailors, but only for a few days and not in combat.

11.4 LOR NPC TABLE

Name	EP	End	Str	Ag	Int	Mov	Def	Mel OB	Mis OB	Gen	Sub	Perc	Mag	# Spells	# Lang	
THE USURPER'S REIGN																
The Royal Family																
Castamir	8,700	76	2	1	1	-1	2	7	0	9	0	6	-2	0	8	Human Ranger
Castaher	3,000	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	8	Human Warrior
Castarion	2,400	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Mûrabêth	3,300	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	2	-5	0	10	Human Warrior
Morlaen	3,000	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Caramir	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	8	Human Warrior
Calimon	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Elendin	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Duranil	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Alandur	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
The Once and Future King																
Eldacar	9,000	76	2	1	1	-1	2	7	0	10	0	6	-2	0	9	Human Ranger
Aerinel	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	7	Human Warrior
Aldamir	8,100	76	2	0	1	-1	2	7	0	9	0	6	-2	0	5	Human Ranger
Beren Harnastin	2,100	67	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	7	0	4	-2	0	5	Human Ranger
Vidurafin	4,200	95	2	1	0	-1	3	7	7	2	0	2	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Vidustain	3,300	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	2	-5	0	4	Human Warrior
Harith	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
The Enemy																
Adûnaphel	9,300	62	0	1	2	-1	1	-2	-1	3	0	5	10	all	15	Nazgûl
Zimrakhil	2,700	53	0	0	2	-1	1	-2	-4	2	-4	4	8	12	5	Human Bard
Belphegor	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Iriel* (human)	4,200	67	1	0	1	-1	2	6	0	8	0	5	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
Iriel* (panther)	—	70	—	—	—	6	4	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Panther
Colfen	3,300	67	1	0	1	-1	2	5	0	7	0	5	-2	0	2	Human Ranger
Neithan*	3,300	67	1	0	1	-1	2	5	0	7	0	5	-2	0	5	Human Ranger
PELARGIR																
Other NPCs																
Carnendil	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	7	Human Warrior
Carnion	1,800	49	1	1	0	1	1	3	2	2	4	5	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Celebriel	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Dórmir	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Híriel	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Lidimir	1,800	49	1	1	0	1	1	3	2	2	4	5	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Sinyadal	600	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Tárain	2,400	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Targon	2,400	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Thorondil	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Adventure: Candle Burning, Burning Bright																
Hirluin	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Khoradûr	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	4	Human Warrior
Telerien	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	4	Human Warrior

11.4 LOR NPC TABLE

Name	EP	End	Str	Ag	Int	Mov	Def	Mel OB	Mis OB	Gen	Sub	Perc	Mag	# Spells	# Lang	
Adventure: The Charred Carts																
Parmandil	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Aurandir	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Adventure: Guards, Crows, and Horrid Scum																
Morgalad	3,000	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
UMBAR																
Telemnar	2,400	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Gordacar	2,400	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	6	Human Warrior
Marmedon	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Mardil	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Menelmir	3,000	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Merul	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Adventure: The Shadow of Darkness																
Girion	600	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	-1	0	5	Human Scout
Hunthor	0	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	-1	2	3	-4	0	3	Human Scout
Lindorië	2,700	67	1	0	1	-1	2	5	-1	7	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
Telemnar	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Ulbar	1,500	53	0	0	2	-1	1	-2	-4	2	-4	3	7	10	4	Human Bard
Fíriel	0	59	2	1	0	-1	3	3	3	1	-3	-2	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Tuor	300	68	2	1	0	-1	3	3	3	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Common cultist	300	68	2	1	0	-1	3	3	3	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Cemendur	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Colfen's henchmen	900	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Adventure: Between Land and Sea																
Kunbeshu	1,800	67	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	6	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
Adventure: A Stray Word																
Rhavas	600	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Tergon	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Perion	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
LOND ERNIL																
Adrazôr	3,900	95	2	1	0	-1	3	7	6	2	0	2	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Adrazôr	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Crippled by illness
Aradan	3,300	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	2	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Giladan	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Tirazôr	3,000	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Beregond	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Halbarad	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Melrandir	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Galbar	900	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Daeron	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior

11.4 LOR NPC TABLE

Name	EP	End	Str	Ag	Int	Mov	Def	Mel OB	Mis OB	Gen	Sub	Perc	Mag	# Spells	# Lang	
Adventure: A Death In the Family																
Maeglin	3,000	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Míriel	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Adventure: Revolt of the Knights																
Borgil	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Ioreth	300	68	2	1	0	-1	3	3	3	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Perion	1,800	49	1	1	0	1	1	3	2	2	4	5	-1	2	5	Human Scout
Adventure: Hunting Iriel																
Amrukh	1,800	49	1	1	0	1	1	3	2	2	4	5	-1	2	3	Human Scout
OSGILIATH																
Angbor	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Gelmir	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Damrod	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Alatar (Offensive)	11,700	62	1	1	2	-1	1	1	-1	3	0	5	10	all	25	Istar
Alatar (Defensive)	20,700	80	1	1	2	-1	1	1	0	4	1	6	10	all	25	Istar
Brenith	1,200	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Cealen	1,800	67	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	6	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
Clennan	1,500	58	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	6	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
Oxrandir	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Terieth	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Tirion	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Adventure: The Memory of Evil																
Estel	0	59	2	1	0	-1	3	3	3	1	-3	-2	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Rastarin	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Mórdulin	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
MINAS ANOR																
Ciryang	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Coratar	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Borondir	3,300	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	2	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Finrod	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Culcamalin	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Aegnor	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Curunír (Offensive)	14,700	71	1	1	2	-1	1	1	-1	4	0	5	10	all	25	Istar
Curunír (Defensive)	20,700	80	1	1	2	-1	1	1	0	4	1	6	10	all	25	Istar
Esteliel Harnastin	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Haleth	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Lórin	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior

11.4 LOR NPC TABLE

Name	EP	End	Str	Ag	Int	Mov	Def	Mel OB	Mis OB	Gen	Sub	Perc	Mag	# Spells	# Lang	
Adventure: Loyal to Whom?																
Irdamir	2,100	67	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	7	0	4	-2	0	5	Human Ranger
Ulrad	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Anborn	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Common cabal member	300	68	2	1	0	-1	3	3	3	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Adventure: The Tomb Robbers																
Goromil	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Amdir	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Harmandil	300	68	2	1	0	-1	3	3	3	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Neldorn	1,500	49	1	1	0	1	1	3	2	2	4	4	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Ringmir	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Saeros	900	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	-1	0	3	Human Scout
MINAS ITHIL																
Heruvorn	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Hador	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Karan	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Pallando (Offensive)	11,700	62	1	1	2	-1	1	1	-1	3	0	5	10	all	18	Istar
Pallando (Defensive)	17,700	71	1	1	2	-1	1	1	-1	4	1	6	10	all	18	Istar
Adventure: Spies at the Tower of the Moon																
Falathar	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Aerin	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Herion	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Boron	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Bregor	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Findegil	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Miriel	300	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	-1	3	3	-4	0	3	Human Scout
Derufin	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Ragnor	2,700	49	1	1	0	1	1	3	3	2	5	5	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Varak	1,200	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Adventure: The Wolf Cubs																
Aelindur	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Gethron /Beregar	300	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	-1	3	3	-4	0	5	Human Scout
Hargon	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Malloriel /Morwen	0	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	-1	2	3	-4	0	5	Human Scout
Rohtur	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Beregar's buddies	300	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	-1	3	3	-4	0	3	Human Scout

11.4 LOR NPC TABLE

Name	EP	End	Str	Ag	Int	Mov	Def	Mel OB	Mis OB	Gen	Sub	Perc	Mag	# Spells	# Lang	
Adventure: The Distressed Husband																
Barahir	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Ariel	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Celebrindor	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Faramir	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Ulrad	600	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Fíriel	300	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	-1	3	3	-4	0	3	Human Scout
THE PALE RIDERS																
Evit	2,400	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Guton	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Mahrbrand	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Slovas	1,800	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Wulfr	2,700	67	1	0	1	-1	2	5	-1	7	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
RATCATCHER																
Faramir	2,100	67	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	7	0	4	-2	0	5	Human Ranger
Raltin	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	2	Human Warrior
Thrangir	1,800	67	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	6	0	4	-2	0	2	Human Ranger
Torgir	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
BERGIL'S ODYSSEY																
Bergil's Friends																
Morwen	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Lotharion	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Team Grey																
Galad	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Beldin	1,200	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Carnendil	900	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Iorlas	900	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Raniel	900	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	-1	0	3	Human Scout
In the Red House																
Meneldor	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Túriel	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
CALENARDHON DURING THE KIN-STRIFE																
Henderch	2,700	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Finlong	3,300	95	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	2	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Sorondothor	3,600	95	2	1	0	-1	3	7	6	2	0	2	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Vardamavi	1,500	86	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
Astrith	2,700	67	1	0	1	-1	2	5	-1	7	0	4	-2	0	5	Human Ranger

11.5.1 TROOP TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

The following paragraphs outline the most common troop types in Gondor in 1441 and their equipment.

Gondor's Army

Line infantry: broadsword, shortsword, spear, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Mounted infantry: broadsword, shortsword, spear, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Anfalas archers: composite bow, broadsword, rigid leather armour and helmet.

Light infantry (reconnaissance troops): composite bows, shortsword, soft leather armour, shield, and helmet. They are often recruited among trappers and hunters of Gondor's wilderness regions.

Castamir's Mercenaries

Southron medium cavalry: scimitar, lance, rigid leather armour, shield, and helmet.

Southron archers: composite bow, scimitar, rigid leather armour, and helmet.

Daen light infantry: uses a variety of weapons: broadsword, shortsword, handaxe, club, javelin, spear, etc. All carry shields and some have soft leather armour.

Daen slingers: sling, shortsword, no armour.

Variag infantry: long spear, soft leather armour, and helmet.

Gondor's Navy

Marine: broadsword, composite bow, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Sailor: shortsword, soft leather armour, helmet

Dor-en-Ernil's Troops

The Knights (heavy cavalry): lance, broadsword, platemail, shield, and helmet.

The Esquires (medium cavalry): lance, broadsword, chainmail, shield, and helmet

Men-at-arms: broadsword, spear or composite bow, chainmail, shield, and helmet

Yeoman archers: longbow, broadsword, chainmail and helmet.

Verderers: longbow, broadsword, rigid leather armour, shield, and helmet.

Eldacar's Troops

Éothraim cavalry: spear, broadsword, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Northman infantry: broadsword, composite bow, chainmail, shield, and helmet.

Northman recon: broadsword, composite bow, rigid leather armour, shield, and helmet.

Name	EP	End	Str	Ag	Int	Mov	Def	Mel OB	Mis OB	Gen	Sub	Perc	Mag	# Spells	# Lang	
General Gondorian Characters																
City Guardsman	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Crow (common)	600	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Crow (elite)	1,200	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	-1	2	3	Human Scout
Thug	600	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	-1	0	2	Human Scout
Gondorian Troops in Castamir's Army																
Line infantry (elite)	1,200	77	2	1	0	-1	3	5	5	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Line infantry	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Anfalas archer	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Light infantry	1,500	58	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	6	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
Mercenaries in Castamir's Army																
Daen infantry	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	2	Human Warrior
Daen slinger	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	2	Human Warrior
Haradrim archer	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Haradrim cavalry	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
<Medium Horse Unarmoured, fast>																
Variag infantry	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Gondorian Navy Crews																
Marine	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Sailor	600	49	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	-1	0	3	Human Scout
Dor-en-Ernil's Troops																
Knight	2,400	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	6	2	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
<Heavy Horse Unarmoured, fast>																
Esquire	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	5	Human Warrior
<Medium Horse Unarmoured, fast>																
Man-at-Arms	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Yeoman archer	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Verderer	2,400	67	1	0	1	-1	2	5	-1	7	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
Eldacar's Troops																
Éothraim cavalry	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
<Medium Horse Unarmoured, fast>																
Northman infantry	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Northman recon	1,500	58	1	0	1	-1	2	4	-1	6	0	4	-2	0	3	Human Ranger
The Sagath																
Sagath cavalry	900	77	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
<Light Horse Unarmoured, very fast>																
The Daen Lintis																
Warrior (normal)	600	68	2	1	0	-1	3	4	4	1	-3	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
Warrior (élite)	2,100	86	2	1	0	-1	3	6	5	2	0	1	-5	0	3	Human Warrior
<Light Horse Unarmoured, very fast>																

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> *"But Valacar far exceeded his father's designs. He grew to love the Northern lands and people, and he married Vidumavi, daughter of Vidugavia...*
>
> *"Therefore when Eldacar succeeded his father there was war in Gondor. But Eldacar did not prove easy to thrust from his heritage. To the lineage of Gondor he added the fearless spirit of the Northmen. He was handsome and valiant, and showed no sign of ageing more swiftly than his father. When the confederates led by the descendants of the kings rose against him, he opposed them to the end of his strength. At last he was besieged in Osgiliath, and held it long, until hunger and the greater forces of the rebels drove him out, leaving the city in flames. In that siege and burning the Tower of the Stone of Osgiliath was destroyed, and the palantír was lost in the waters."*
>
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- **MINAS ANOR**—initially neutral in the civil conflict, but siding with Castamir after the fall of Osgiliath; numerous loyalists to Eldacar make the strategic metropolis anything but a sinecure for the garrison commander.
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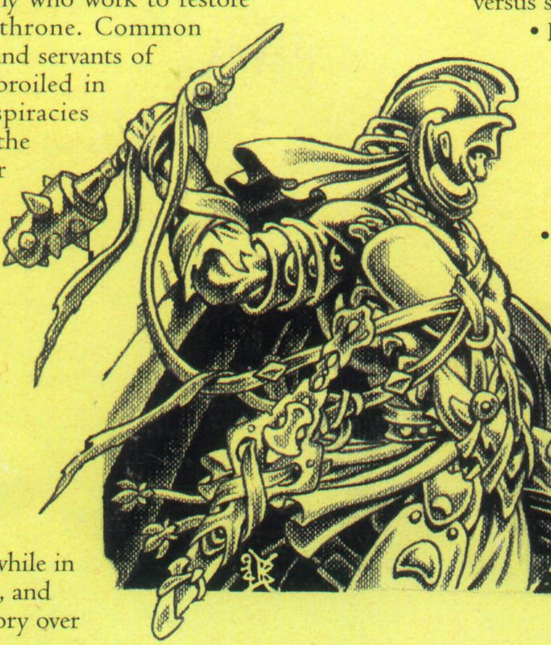

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